THE STORY OF ENGLISH LITERATURE

ANNA BUCKLAND

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THE

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OF

ENGLISH LITERATURE

BY

ANNA BUCKLAND

WITH ADDITIONAL CHAPTERS, BRINGING THE WORK DOWN TO THE CLOSE OF THE VICTORIAN ERA

BY

CHRISTABEL COLERIDGE

"Consider what nation it is whereof ye are; a nation not slow and dull, but of a quick, ingenious, and piercing spirit; acute to invent; subtle and sinewy to discourse; not beneath the reach of any point the highest that human capacity can soar to; a nation of Prophets, of Sages, and of Worthies."

MILTON'S "AREOPAGITICA."

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First Edition, *August*, 1882.
Reprinted 1885, 1887, 1889, 1890, 1892, 1894, 1895, 1896, 1898, 1900, 1902.
New and Enlarged Edition 1904. *Reprinted* 1905.

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THE STORY OF

ENGLISH LITERATURE.

CHAPTER I.

KELTIC AND FIRST ENGLISH LITERATURE

(A.D. 248—1066).

THE earliest literature of this country was not written by the English people. Before our forefathers came over from the north of Germany, there was a people living in this island called the Kelts; and the remains of this race are still dwelling amongst us in the north of Scotland, in Ireland, and in Wales. The Kelts were divided into two great families—the Gaels, whose descendants are living in the Highlands and in Ireland, and the Cymri, who were the forefathers of the Welsh. All the Kelts have much power of imagination, and a keen sense of what is beautiful both in nature and life; they have quick feelings also, which are easily stirred to strong emotion, though there is a difference between the Gael and the Cymri in this respect, for while the Gael like to be moved to laughter and joy by what is lively and bright, the Cymri love to be touched to tears by what is pathetic and mournful; but both the Gael and the Cymri are readily stirred to intense enthusiasm by a heroic story of brave deeds and resolute conflict. If we were asked, what form of literature would such a race produce? we might answer at once—poetry. The Kelts had among

them a class of men called Bards, who were the poets of the nation. They had, perhaps, not always a much higher poetic gift than many of the people had, but they put the thoughts and feelings of the people into poetic words, and so became as it were the tongues of the people, speaking for them what each one could not utter for himself. These poems were seldom written down, but they were sung by the bards, and learnt by the people, who sang them again to their harps.

Among such a race we can easily imagine that any event which stirred the heart of the whole people would be celebrated in their poetry; and thus we find that most of the fragments which have come down to us relate to the struggle of a clan or family for existence among the Gael, and to a great battle fought by the Cymri against the Teutons, who were gaining possession of Britain.

The Gaelic battle was fought, so it is said, about the year 284; it was called the battle of Gabhra. The Gaels in Ireland were at that time divided into four tribes or clans, and one of these had risen to so much power that the other three clans joined together to destroy it. At the head of this powerful clan was a chief named Fionn, or Fingal; he had two sons, and the second of them, whose name was Fergus, was the chief bard; the elder, named Oisin, or Ossian, was also a bard and a warrior; and so, too, was Fionn's cousin, Caeilte MacRonan. With three poets in the family, there would be of course much singing of the family history, and especially of the last fierce battle in which the powerful clan of Fionn was crushed by the other tribes. In that battle a son of Oisin, a brave young man, named Oscar, who was greatly beloved by the whole tribe, had fallen on the battle-field; and his death was sung by his uncle Fergus, the chief bard. Fionn, the chief, is supposed to be asking Fergus about the battle, and after Fergus has told him the sad story of the defeat of their clan,

and of the many heroes who had fought bravely and had fallen in the struggle, Fionn says—

"Now, O Bard——my son's son, my desire,
My Oscar, of him, Fergus, tell
How he hewed at the helms ere he fell."

To which Fergus replies—

"Hard were it, Fionn, to number,
Heavy for me were the labour,
To tell of the host that has fallen,
Slain by the valour of Oscar.
No rush of the waterfall swifter,
No pounce of the hawk on his prey,
No whirlpool more sweeping and deadly
Than Oscar in battle that day.
And you, who last saw him, could see
How he throbbed in the roar of the fray,—
As a storm-worried leaf on the tree,
Whose fellows lie fallen below,
As an aspen will quiver and sway,
While the axe deals it blow upon blow.
When he saw that MacArt, King of Erin,
Still lived in the midst of the roar,
Oscar gathered his force to roll on him,
As waves roll to break on the shore.
The King's son, Cairbar, saw the danger,
He shook his great hungering spear,
Grief of griefs! drove its point through our Oscar,
Who braved the death-stroke without fear.
Rushing still on MacArt, King of Erin,
His weight on his weapon he threw,
And smote at MacArt, and again smote
Cairbar, whom that second blow slew.
So died Oscar, a king in his glory.
I, Fergus, the Bard, grieve my way
Through all lands, saying how went the story
Of Gabhra's fierce battle-day. 'Say!'"*

The other great battle celebrated in Keltic literature was fought nearly three hundred years after the battle of

* "Library of English Literature." Prof. Henry Morley. Vol. i.

Gabhra. Our own forefathers, the Teutons, from North Germany were now gaining possession of the land, and the Cymric Kelts were being driven further and further westward. But the Kelts did not yield without many a hard struggle for land and liberty; and the danger and conflict of the time called out brave warriors, who fell on the battle-field, dying for freedom and home; and produced many a deeply-stirred poet, who sang of hope in the conflict, and of sorrow and mourning over those who fell in the struggle.

Among the warrior chiefs of the time Urien was the most famous. He carried on the war of Keltic independence in the north, while Arthur, a name less known in Keltic literature than in English, was the leader in the south. Around Urien gathered the chief poets of the time: Aneurin, Llywarch Hen, and Taliesin. Aneurin was also a warrior, and was himself present at the great battle of Cattraeth, the sad story of which he is supposed to sing in a poem called Gododin. Ninety-seven stanzas of this poem still remain, and nearly every one is a lament over a different Cymric chief who fell in this battle.

The battle of Cattraeth was probably fought near Richmond, in Yorkshire; it was one of the last desperate efforts of the Kelts to expel the Teuton invaders; and many tribes had joined their forces for this final struggle. The battle lasted for a week, and three hundred and sixty of the Cymric chiefs fell upon the battle-field. One of the stanzas of the Gododin describes the gay going-forth of the chiefs to battle, and the dark sad close of the long conflict when all was over—

"To Cattraeth's vale in glittering row
Twice two hundred warriors go;
Every warrior's manly neck
Chains of regal honour deck
Wreathed in many a golden link;
From the golden cup they drink

Nectar that the bees produce,
Or the grape's extatic juice,
Flushed with mirth and hope they burn,
But none from Cattraeth's vale return,
Save Aeron brave and Conan strong
(Bursting through the bloody throng),
And I, the meanest of them all,
That live to weep and sing their fall." *

Llywarch Hen, another poet of the time, was the Prince of Argoed, and also took part in the struggle of his race with the invading Teutons. He was chief bard and friend of Urien, and fought beside him at Lindisfarne, where the great chief was killed. After the battle, Llywarch carried the head of his friend and chief from the field wrapped in his cloak, and he sang—"The head that I carry carried me; I shall find it no more; it will come no more to my succour. Woe to my hand, my happiness is lost!" Llywarch outlived many of his friends and all his sons, who every one died upon the battle-field fighting for their country. He was an old man, and had been called Llywarch Hen—which means the old—when he lost his last and youngest son Gwenn. Over him he sang, what was perhaps his last lament—"O, Gwenn, woe to him who is too old, since he has lost you. A man was my son, a hero, a generous warrior, and he was the nephew of Urien. Gwenn has been slain at the ford of Morlas. Sweetly sang a bird on a pear-tree above the head of Gwenn, before they covered him with the turf. That broke the heart of old Llywarch."

Those were terrible times, and men who felt things as the bards did, and saw around them the slaughter and down-fall of their race, and the hopelessness of the struggle, grew broken in spirit, and could sing no more stirring songs, filled with the promise of victory to the Cymri. Thus Merlin, a bard of Arthur's hall, went out of his mind at the sight of

* Gray's "Death of Hoel."

the miseries and horrors that he saw, and spent the rest of his life in desolate places, singing only of sorrow and mourning, until he was at last found lying dead on the bank of a river.

At length the long struggle between the two races came to an end. The Teutons made settlements and dwelt as conquerors in the land; but the Kelts still held undisturbed possession of Wales. With the coming in of the Teutons we shall find a new element in the literature of our country. We have said that there runs through all English literature an earnest striving after the highest ideal of what is right, as well as of what is beautiful. Now this steadfast desire to find out the right and to put down wrong comes into our literature from the Teutons. They had less imagination than the Kelts, and seldom made use of any figures of speech, but spoke the truth in simple, plain words. By degrees our island became peopled by the Teutons, and as the principal tribe among the settlers was called Englisc, the people all took the name of English, and called the country England.

They spoke a language which was formed by the mixing of the different dialects of the Teutonic settlers, and they called this language English. It forms the great foundation of the language we first learned to speak as little children; but the English of the present day has undergone some changes, which we shall hear of later on in the story of our English literature. The earliest literature we have in English is perhaps the story of Beowulf. The saga of Beowulf was brought into England by the northern tribes which settled in Northumbria, for it is a story of Scandinavian life. But the language in which it comes to us is the First English, of the period after the Teutons had settled in England, and the scenery of the poem is very like that of the Yorkshire coast around Whitby; there are also indications of its having been written after the

conversion of the Teutons to Christianity. It is probably, therefore, an old, well-known Scandinavian story put into First English verse by some poet of a later time.

This is the story:—Hrothgar, King of Denmark, had built a great house for himself and his followers, or "hearth-sharers," as the poem calls them. It was a large hall, with flat stones down the centre, which formed the hearth. Around were tables and benches, and the latter served for beds at night. There was a great feast when the hall was finished, and the sounds of minstrelsy and song floated far out into the dark night. They reached the ears of a monster who lived at the bottom of a lonely lake across the moors. When all the warriors were asleep, the door of the hall was pushed opened, and Grendel, the monster, stalked into the hall. He seized thirty of the sleepers, carried them off and ate them. Night after night the warriors one after another disappeared, until Hrothgar had lost nearly all his men, and those which remained had to find another sleeping-place, so that the beautiful hall, the pride of Hrothgar and his hearth-sharers, stood empty and deserted.

One day the watchers on the coast saw a vessel approaching the shore of Denmark from Norway. A young Viking was on board, tall and strong as a young oak-tree, whose single hand had in it the grip of thirty men. This was Beowulf. In his own land the wandering minstrels had told of Grendel and his deeds, and Beowulf was come to slay the monster. That night the warriors feasted again in Hrothgar's hall, and then lay down to sleep; but Grendel had heard the sounds of revelry, and came striding across the moors into the dark hall. He laid his hand on Beowulf, and instantly found himself seized in a grip from which he could not get free. A struggle began, and at last Grendel tore himself away, leaving his arm in Beowulf's hand.

There was feasting and joy that night in Hrothgar's hall, and the warriors lay down to sleep, as they thought, in peace. But in the dead of night a more terrible monster, in the form of a woman, strode into the hall, and seized one of the best of Hrothgar's men. This was Grendel's mother, come to avenge her son. Beowulf was sleeping in another place, and in vain did the warriors draw their swords upon the monster. She escaped; and the next day Beowulf undertook to find her and slay her also. He found the waste of waters where she dwelt, and descended through it till he came to her dwelling. There he saw the dead body of Grendel, and there also he saw stores of treasures heaped up high, and amongst these an old sword of the giants. With this he killed, after a long struggle, the mother of Grendel. Taking the head of Grendel only, and leaving the hoard of treasures, Beowulf rose up through the water, to the joy of the waiting warriors who had thought him dead. Four men could scarcely carry Grendel's head between them back to the hall.

The second part of the saga of Beowulf tells how he fought with and killed a fiery dragon, who had wasted his own land, and how he found in the dragon's cave a vast hoard of treasure, which the monster guarded. But Beowulf saved his country at the expense of his own life; the dragon had wounded him, and for that poison there was no cure. He left the treasure to his people, and bade them bury him on the high cliff by the sea-shore. Over his grave the warriors raised a mighty mound, and rode around it singing a song of mourning for their chief, and praising him as the very king of men, and yet the mildest, kindest of them all.

Although when the Teutons first settled in this country they were heathen, yet they did not remain so. Augustine came over from Rome, and taught Christianity to the English in the south; and the Kelts, many of whom were

Christians before the Teutons came, taught the settlers in the north; but it was long before the whole English people became Christians, and there was much good work to be done by those who had received the light of God's truth, in teaching others who were still ignorant of it. In order the better to carry on this work with system and lasting success, religious houses were established in different parts of the country, very like our mission stations in heathen lands. In these houses a number of good men and women dwelt; they gave themselves to the study of God's Word, and of everything which could help them to teach and raise the people living around them; and by their holy, loving lives they showed the people the power of Christianity, and how just and true are God's commands. These religious houses became thus the centres of light and spiritual life, and from them came forth most of the English literature of that time.

One of these houses had been built upon the East Cliff at Whitby, on the Yorkshire coast. It was presided over by a good woman, named Hilda, of whom it was said that—"All who knew her called her mother, for her singular piety and grace; she was not only an example of good life to those that lived in her house, but gave occasion of salvation and amendment to many who lived at a distance, to whom the happy fame was brought of her virtue and industry."

Hilda and the other servants of God living in the religious house at Whitby gave their best energies to the work of teaching Christianity to the heathen in that district, and one of their first converts was a farmer named Cædmon. After he became a Christian, it happened one day that Cædmon was at a feast in the neighbourhood of Whitby; when after supper, according to the custom of the time, the harp was brought into the hall, and passed from guest to guest, every one being expected to sing in turn some song

in praise of the old Teutonic gods. Cædmon had listened to the wild songs extolling the deeds of Thor and Wodin, and he thought there is a far greater God than these, who has done better, nobler things than they, even our own Father and Maker—the Good. And he felt he could not be so untrue to Him, as to take the harp and sing praises to false gods, and yet he could not sing songs of the power and love of the true God, because he did not know any. So before the harp came to him, he got up from his seat and said he would go to the stable and look after the horses and oxen, which had brought the guests to the feast, and which were put up there for the night, and needed guarding from robbers and wolves.

When Cædmon found himself alone in the stable, where he was to keep watch all night, his thoughts would turn to the glory and the love of the true God. It was only lately that he had heard of how God made the heavens and the earth, and all things that are therein; and the thought was, no doubt, much more strongly present in his mind than in ours, who have been told ever since we first opened our eyes upon this world, that it was God's world, and that He made it and us. And joined with this thought there was the deep regret in his heart, that while he knew songs about the old false gods, he could not sing the high praise of the true Creator and Father. With these feelings in his mind Cædmon fell asleep, and as he slept his waking thoughts mixed themselves with his dreams, and he fancied that a person came to him and said, "Cædmon, sing some song to me;" then he said, "I cannot sing, and that is why I left the feast." But the other, who talked to him, replied, "Yet you shall sing." So Cædmon said, "What shall I sing?" "Sing of how God made all things," answered the person.

Then Cædmon began to sing, and the verses came to him in his dream, and he sang a song of praise to God,

the Creator of all things. When Cædmon awoke, he remembered his dream-song, and he added more verses to it speaking of God's power and love in the making of the world.

The next morning Cædmon went up to the religious house upon the cliff, and told the steward of his dream and of the song which he had sung; and the steward took him to Hilda, who made him repeat his verses to her and the good men and students there. They all thought that he had received a gift of sacred song from God, and they told him some other Bible stories, and bid him see if he could put them too into verse. Cædmon went home, and the next day he came back, having put these parts of the Bible also into excellent verse.

Hilda now proposed to Cædmon that he should come and live in the religious house, where they would teach him more of the Bible history, and where he could spend his time undisturbed in making poetry and songs, which might teach the people God's idea of right, and win them to love and serve him. So Cædmon spent the rest of his life there, and he put into verse all those beautiful stories which we have known ever since we were little children—the story of Abraham's great faith in God when he was willing to offer up Isaac; of the Israelites passing down without fear into the depths of the Red Sea; and of God's great care over those who are steadfast to the right, keeping them safe in the midst of the burning, fiery furnace, so that, as Cædmon sang:—

> "Therein they unhurt
> Walked as in shining of the summer sun
> When day breaks, and the winds disperse the dew."

At last the time drew near when Cædmon must sing his songs with all the just and true before the throne of God in heaven. He was ailing for about a fortnight before his

death, but still able to be about. On the evening of the night in which he died, he asked some one to make up a bed for him in the room in which those persons were placed who appeared to be dying; and here he went to rest. After receiving the Holy Communion, he said, "I am in charity, my children, with all the servants of God." He then asked if the hour was near when the praises of God were sung in the night, wishing, perhaps, to join in them once more. He was told it was not far off. "It is well," he replied; "let us await that hour." Then laying his head upon the pillow, he fell into a slumber, and in silence his spirit passed to God.

Cædmon was probably our first English poet; and it is well to remember how English literature begins with a note of praise to God, recognising our relation to Him in love and duty; and we shall find that this strain, begun by Cædmon, runs through our literature down to the present time, and that it rises highest in our greatest writers. This is how Cædmon starts the solemn music:

> "Most right it is that we praise with our words,
> Love in our minds, the Warden of the Skies,
> Glorious King of all the hosts of men;
> He speeds the strong, and He is the head of all
> His high Creation, the Almighty Lord."

About the time that Cædmon was writing his poems, a little child was born near Wearmouth, in Durham, who was afterwards called Bede. He was only a little fellow of seven when he was taken into a religious house that had just been founded at Wearmouth. In those times, orphans, or any children whose fathers and mothers wished for them a better training and life than their own, were received into the religious houses in England, to be taught and prepared for God's service, much as heathen children are now taken into our mission stations in foreign lands. It is not known

whether Bede had lost his father and mother, or whether being a bright, little boy, they were willing to give him up to be educated at the religious house, instead of keeping him in ignorance at home. When Bede was ten, he was moved from the house at Wearmouth to another, which had just been opened at Jarrow, on the banks of the Tyne; and here he spent the rest of his life for fifty-two years.

During the earlier part of this time, Bede was busy at work learning all he could; and learning in those days was about as different from what it is now as we should find feeding to be, supposing we had to plough the land, sow the corn, cut it, grind it, and make it into bread ourselves, before we could put a piece into our mouths. There were very few school-books, and very few persons who knew how to teach; but Bede did not grumble at or linger over the difficulties in his way. It was the duty set before him, and in giving himself faithfully to it, he found, as he tells us, "great delight in learning." Besides his school work, Bede had to do various things in the house, for there were no servants, and every inmate took his part in cooking, or cleaning, or in working in the fields and garden. He also sang in the choir, and as he grew older had the direction of the daily singing in the church.

When Bede was nineteen, he received deacon's orders, and at thirty he was ordained a priest. The chief work of his life now became the teaching of the children and students in the schools. The difficulties he had met with had not daunted him as a scholar, but they had given him perhaps a kindly sympathy with those who were now stumbling along the same rugged road, and he made it his business to compile from the ponderous volumes, through which he had had to labour, just the clear, concise information which the young scholar wanted, so as to save him much time and toil; and this with patient industry he put together into handy school text-books.

Bede found that his pupils were curious and eager to know something about the world around them, and he compiled for them a book containing all that was then known about nature and its laws. This was the first English school-book of Natural Science, and it remained for centuries the chief book of that kind used in English schools.

The greatest of Bede's works was his "Ecclesiastical History of the English People," which was in fact the first history of England. It tells the story of the early times, when the "Englisc folc" first settled in this island, of the landing of Augustine and his missionaries, of the spread of Christianity in the various kingdoms into which England was then divided, of different events which had come under his own observation, or which he had learnt from friends in other parts of the country; and he tells everything with the clearness and simplicity of a man who believes he is speaking the truth in every line. The careful, conscientious way in which he did all his work is shown in a remark he made just before his death, about a book he was compiling—"I will not have my pupils read a falsehood, nor labour therein without profit after my death."

Bede wrote as many as forty-five different books, all of them intended for teaching and usefulness. At the end of his "Ecclesiastical History" he gives the names of these, and then says:—

"And now, I beseech Thee, good Jesus, that to whom Thou hast graciously granted sweetly to partake of the words of Thy wisdom and knowledge, Thou wilt also vouchsafe, that he may sometime or other come to Thee, the Fountain of all wisdom, and always appear before Thy face, who livest and reignest, world without end. Amen."

The fame of Bede as an earnest, successful teacher, and a man of great learning, spread far and wide through the

land; and in the later years of his life, there were as many as six hundred students of different ages in the schools of the religious house at Jarrow. All who came within Bede's influence must have felt the pure beauty of his simple, faithful life, as well as the power of his teaching; and many of his pupils were bound to him by ties as strong and tender as those uniting children to their father. But the time came when the dear master was to be taken from them; and through all the long thousand years and more that have passed since then, there has come down to us a letter, written just after Bede's death by one of his pupils, named Cuthbert, to his schoolfellow and friend, Cuthwin, who was not then at Jarrow, giving him an account of the last days of their much-loved teacher. This letter was written in the year 735; it begins:—

"To his fellow-reader, Cuthwin, beloved in Christ, Cuthbert, his schoolfellow; health for ever in the Lord." He then goes on to thank Cuthwin for letters, the chief satisfaction of which had been the assurance that he was offering prayers "for our father and master Bede, whom God loved," and he proposes, for the love of him, to relate in what manner he departed this world—"understanding that you also desire and ask the same. He was much troubled with shortness of breath, yet without pain, before the day of our Lord's Resurrection, that is about a fortnight, and thus he afterwards passed his life, cheerful and rejoicing, giving thanks to Almighty God every day and night, nay, every hour, till the day of our Lord's Ascension, and daily gave lessons to us, his disciples, and whatever remained of the day he spent in singing Psalms. He also passed the night awake in joy and thanksgiving, unless a short sleep prevented it. I declare with truth, that I have never seen with my eyes, nor heard with my ears, any man so earnest in giving thanks to the living God. O, truly happy man! He chanted the sentence of St. Paul the Apostle, 'It is fearful

to fall into the hands of the living God,' and much more out of Holy Writ; wherein also he admonished us to think of our last hour, and to shake off the sleep of the soul; and being learned in our poetry, he said some things also in our tongue. He also sang antiphons, one of which is, 'O glorious King, Lord of all power, who triumphing this day, didst ascend above all the heavens; do not forsake us, orphans, but send down upon us the Spirit of truth which was promised to us by the Father. Hallelujah.' And when he came to these words, 'do not forsake us,' he burst into tears, and wept much, and an hour after he began to repeat where he had commenced, and we, hearing it, mourned with him. By turns we read, and by turns we wept, nay we wept always while we read. During these days he laboured to compose two works well worthy to be remembered, besides the lessons we had from him, viz., he translated the Gospel of St. John as far as the words, 'But what are they among so many' (chap. vi. 9), into our own tongue for the benefit of the Church; and some collections out of the Book of Notes of Bishop Isidorus. When the Tuesday before the Ascension of our Lord came, he began to suffer still more in his breath, and a small swelling appeared in his feet; but he passed all that day, and dictated cheerfully, and now and then, among other things, said, 'Go on quickly; I know not how long I shall hold out, and whether my Maker will not soon take me away.' And so he spent the night awake, and in thanksgiving; and when the morning appeared, that is Wednesday, he ordered us to write with all speed, what he had begun. There was one of us with him, who said to him, 'Most dear master, there is still one chapter wanting; do you think it troublesome to be asked any more questions?' He answered, 'It is no trouble; take your pen, and write fast,' which he did. He said, 'It is time that I return to Him who formed me out of nothing; I have lived

long; my merciful Judge well foresaw my life for me; the time of my dissolution draws nigh, for I desire to die, and to be with Christ.' Having said much more, he passed the day joyfully until the evening; and the boy above mentioned said, 'Dear master, there is yet one sentence not written.' He answered, 'Write quickly.' Soon after the boy said, 'The sentence is now written; it is ended.' He replied, 'It is well; you have said the truth. It is ended. Receive my head into your hands; for it is a great satisfaction to me to sit facing my holy place where I was wont to pray, that I may also sitting call upon my Father.' And thus on the pavement of his little cell, singing, 'Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost,' he breathed his last, and so departed to the heavenly kingdom."

Thus Cuthbert tells his friend Cuthwin of the last days of this good and faithful servant of God, and of how he did his work to the end, and finished it before he lay down to rest.

Besides Cædmon and Bede, there were many other poets and scholars in the first English times as true-hearted as they. Such was Aldhelm in the Religious House at Malmesbury, who would take his harp, and stand on the bridge as a gleeman, singing songs, with so much earnest purpose in them, and yet so much attractiveness, that the people who had slipped out of church without waiting for the sermon, would stop to listen, and get at the same time "health to their minds." Many of the sacred songs of this time have come down to us, and are preserved in two collections, one called the "Vercelli Book," because it was found in 1823 in a monastery at Vercelli, in Italy, where it had perhaps been carried a thousand years before by some Englishman; the other is called the "Exeter Book," because it belongs to the library of Exeter Cathedral, having been presented to it by Bishop Leofric eight hundred years ago.

And among the scholars of the time we may remember Alcuin, born probably the same year that Bede died, 735, and as earnest as he in striving to set up the kingdom of God upon earth, although, owing to much of his life being spent abroad at the Court of Charlemagne, he has less connection with English literature. Alfred the Great, too, has a place in the story of our literature, for he made, or caused to be made, translations of many valuable works into the English tongue; and besides this, he strove in every way to educate his people, and thus fit them to read and understand their own literature, and to profit by it.

The first English literature, as we have seen, had one strong, simple purpose running through all of it, and that was the raising of men to a higher life of thought and duty; so steadfast were its writers to this aim, that their works consist almost entirely of religious books, sacred poetry, histories, and school text-books. We may be thankful that God, who rules the onward course of truth and right, so ordered things that the foundations of our literature should be thus laid in the simple setting forth of our relations to God in trust, and love, and duty; although this may not include the whole scope of literature, as we shall see further on in our story.

CHAPTER II

ROMANCES AND CHRONICLES (1066—1300).

Our first English writers were men living apart from the common life of the world in the Religious Houses, and healthy as their sense of religion was, and priceless as was the value of their work, there was much of human experience upon which they could not enter, and many stirring interests in which they had little part.

The Norman Conquest brought new elements into our literature, which knit it into closer sympathy with the daily life of men and the things they most care for belonging to this world. We all have a strong interest in our own lives; we like to remember the past, and to dream dreams of beautiful things to come to us in the future; and we have a strong interest too in the lives of other people; we delight in hearing of what befalls them, in stories of their sorrows and success, of the dangers they escape, the difficulties they overcome, of their noble deeds, the strength and constancy of their love, the patience of their endurance; and we rejoice, when it all ends happily at last, out of our consciousness, that it is the true end of all things in life to "work together for good."

Then beyond the lives of ourselves and of other individuals, we are all bound together in one great life, which is the life of our nation. We know that this great life was going on long before we were born and began to form a part of it, and that it has a past full of interest for us,

because it is the story of England's childhood and growth, the story of the events that in every age have helped the nation onwards towards a free, strong, and noble life, and of the men in every generation, kings and rulers, patriots and reformers, who have taken part in the direction of the nation's course. In the years which followed the Norman Conquest, we shall find that our literature is enriched by two classes of works—romances, or the stories of individual life, and chronicles, or stories of the nation's life.

Before we speak of these books themselves we must notice a change in the language, which up to this time had remained much the same, since the first English settlements in our country. The Normans, although like the English a Teutonic race, had not like them kept their own language when they settled in France; but had gradually dropped their own tongue and taken to the French, so that when they conquered England they spoke a French dialect, which we call Norman-French. French then became for a time the language of the Court and of the upper class gathered about the king, and was also used in Parliament and in the courts of law. But the great body of the English people still spoke their own language, so that at first there were two streams, as it were, running side by side, the smaller of Norman-French and the larger of First English. By degrees these mingled; the smaller began to run into the larger, and for a while discoloured its waters, but in the end became lost in it, only adding to the depth and width of the great stream.

At the time when Norman-French and First English were both spoken as two distinct languages in this country, there was another tongue which all educated persons in the land, whether Normans or English, could understand, and that was Latin; this, therefore, was used as the language of literature, for the greater number of readers could all read books in Latin. The chronicles or histories of England written at this time are in Latin

There were many of these chronicles written during the time of the Norman kings, and of the first Plantagenets. They were histories put together by one of the monks of a monastery from older records, and then when the history was brought down to his own time, he kept a particular account of every event as it happened. One of the chief of these chroniclers was William of Malmesbury. He was born in 1095, nearly thirty years after the battle of Hastings, and one of his parents was Norman and the other English. When quite a boy he was taken into the Religious House at Malmesbury, where Aldhelm had lived. Here, like Bede, he studied hard, and read every book he could get. As he grew older he had the charge of the library at Malmesbury, and gave all the time not engaged in religious service to literature. He wrote a History of England, beginning at the time when the English first came over to this country under Hengist and Horsa, and this he carried on, through the story of the Norman Conquest, down to the reign of Henry I. This book being written in Latin, he called "De Gestis Regum," and it was dedicated to Robert, Earl of Gloucester, the half-brother of the Empress Maud. At the request of Earl Robert, he continued to write the story of passing events as they happened, calling this book "Historia Novella," or Modern History; and this contains the record of the troubled reign of Stephen, when Maud and Robert were contesting Stephen's right to hold possession of the crown. William of Malmesbury related all he could gather about the events of this civil war, either from Robert or from persons visiting the monastery at Malmesbury. The last thing he records is how Queen Maud made her escape from Oxford at Christmas-time, when the snow was on the ground, she and her attendants being dressed in white sheets. The news of this was brought to the monastery at Malmesbury by some one who had heard the story, and the monk William wrote it in his book, but he

adds:—"This I purpose describing more fully if, by God's permission, I shall ever learn the truth of it from those who were present." Here he lays down his pen, and he never wrote anything in his book again, so that it is supposed he must have died shortly after. Besides the History of England, William of Malmesbury wrote a History of English Bishops and Abbots, and some lives of the saints.

We now come to the romances of English literature. There was a class of men in the north of France, called Trouvères, who wrote in verse spirited stories of Charlemagne, Roland, and other heroes; and they had legends too of old Keltic traditions of Brittany about famous chiefs who, in the old time, had withstood the Roman and Teutonic invasions. These stories were written in French, and were brought over into England, and read with great delight by the nobles and ladies of the Norman race; but these romances can be hardly said to belong to English literature, although the taste for them helped to call forth the same kind of writing in our own literature. Whilst William of Malmesbury was writing his "Chronicle," there was a monk living in the monastery at Monmouth, called Geoffrey. He was a Welshman, and had the strong feeling of nationality as well as the bright imagination of the Keltic race. He found that all the chronicles and histories, which had been written at that time, began with the first settlements of the English in this country; but centuries before that, his race had occupied the island of Britain, and had had of course a history. No doubt there had been kings as great and good as Alfred, and ladies as fair as Elgiva; but unfortunately no one had told any stories about them. This did not, however, prevent Geoffrey of Monmouth from writing a history of Britain before the English came over to the country. He gathered together all the old Keltic traditions and legends that he could find, and in this way he laid hold of one or two names of British kings;

but it is very disappointing in reading a story to come to a great gap, and Geoffrey would not allow his readers to be disappointed in this way. Wherever he could not find a history he made one; he had the feeling of a true artist, that his work must be complete, and so he gave an unbroken line of British kings, who each reigned so many years and months, and was in his time followed by his successor. The Kelts prided themselves on being the ancient race of this country, so Geoffrey made their first king to be the great-grandson of Æneas, Prince of Troy. He called him Brut, for Brutus is a name which had fine associations connected with it in Roman history. But however finely the history of the British kings might be made to begin, there could be but one disastrous close to it: there must come the story of the invasion of the Teutons, and the yielding of the British before the conquering race; yet this part of his history Geoffrey contrived to make the most interesting of all, and to gain the sympathies and enthusiasm of his readers so strongly to the side of the British, that every one felt, while the Teutons conquered, it was the Kelts who deserved success. He did it in this way: during the last great struggle between the two races, there were, as we have seen, two great chiefs, whose names have been handed down in poems and traditions. One of these was Urien, the other Arthur. Of Urien much more is known than of Arthur; and had Geoffrey chosen him for his hero, and surrounded him with the fictions of his historic romance, some truth-loving Englishman might have come forward, and gravely proved that Urien did not, and could not, have done all that Geoffrey ascribed to him; so Geoffrey chose Arthur, of whom little more was known, excepting that he was really a leader in the contest between the British and the English, and that he had a bard named Merlin. No one could say what Arthur did, or did not do; and Geoffrey, in order to prevent troublesome questions as to his

authorities, speaks of a certain book, containing an ancient history of Britain, which had been given him by Walter, Archdeacon of Oxford, who had found it in Brittany. He does not wish, perhaps, that the literal and exact English chroniclers should take his history for unvarnished truth and copy it into their books, for he advises them "to be silent about the kings of the Britons, since *they* have not that book in the British language, which Walter, Archdeacon of Oxford, brought out of Brittany." This they certainly had not, and probably Geoffrey meant it to be understood that he had not got it either; for no one ever appears to have seen the book at that time or since.

There are many charming stories in Geoffrey of Monmouth's "Chronicle," which have been retold in later English literature. Thus Shakespeare tells again Geoffrey's stories of King Lear and of Cymbeline, and Milton repeats the story of Sabrina; but the most interesting of all were the stories about Arthur, and these we shall meet with again and again in English literature. Arthur was to be the last of the British kings, and Geoffrey was determined he should be the best. He therefore thought of everything which people at that time most admired in a hero, and he made Arthur all this. It was the age of chivalry, when a perfect knight represented the idea of all that was noblest in manhood, so Arthur appears in Geoffrey's "Chronicle" the very ideal of knighthood. He was strong and courageous, full of bodily power and energy, striving as the chief glory of life to overcome every foe, and win fame as a warrior.

Geoffrey of Monmouth's "Chronicle" became immediately a popular book. The Norman baron, who did not care for study, and despised books, delighted in the stories of Arthur and his knights, which were so like his own adventures, and realised so much of what he aspired to be and do; and ladies, too, who read nothing but romance and poetry, longed to read Geoffrey's Latin book. Very soon

it was turned into French verse, first by Gaimar, in order that Constance, wife of Ralph FitzGilbert, might read it; then Wace made a better version of it, which was widely read both in France and England. Wace's book came out in 1155, the year after Henry II. had begun to reign, and six years after Geoffrey's "Chronicle" had appeared; and the enthusiasm for Arthur, which the "Chronicle" had awakened, was still more stirred by Wace's poetical romance. Henry II. went to Glastonbury to see Arthur's tomb, for it was said that he was buried there; and his son, Prince Geoffrey, gave the name of the favourite hero to his little boy, who was afterwards the Prince Arthur of John's reign.

It will be seen that the highest aspiration of Arthur and his knights was to fight and conquer; and in such contests the victory must generally be to the strong in body, without regard to the measure of their souls. Now though it is good that men should be strong, and if a man has to fight, he had better stand his ground firmly, fight as hard as he can, and do his very best to subdue the foe, yet this is by no means the whole of a noble manhood, nor is it the highest glory of life. There was an earnest man living in the reign of Henry II. who strongly felt this. His name was Walter Map. He had been brought up to the Church; but the circumstances of his life had brought him much into contact with men of all classes in the world, and he had thus learned how to speak to them, so that those who had little interest in religion should yet listen to him. He saw how in the Church itself, many men were given up to pleasing themselves, eating and drinking, and caring more for their own ease and pleasure than for the service of God; and he had written some clever, lively verses, professedly spoken by a gluttonous Bishop Golias, in order to rouse men to a sense of these evils.

Map could enter into the admiration which everybody had for Arthur and his knights, but he saw that though

bodily strength and skill are worthy of admiration, yet these are only a part of the highest ideal of man. So Map re-wrote the Arthur stories in the form of prose romances, and he began them with the legend of the Holy Graal, which had never before been joined to the Arthur stories. The Holy Graal (low Latin *gradale*) was, according to the legend, the dish in which the lamb had been served at the last Passover kept by Christ with His disciples. After the death of our Lord, the dish had been used in washing His wounds, when His body was taken down from the Cross. A deep spiritual meaning was thus associated with the Graal, because it had been brought into such sacred connection with the last sufferings and death of Christ our Lord, and had also held the last Paschal lamb, which was a type of Christ. It appeared the most holy and precious thing upon earth, and seemed to be a symbol of that "hidden wisdom of God, which none of the princes of this world knew," but which God "revealed unto babes."

It was said that the Holy Graal had been brought into Britain by Joseph of Arimathea, who had fled to this island in the early persecution of the Christians by the Jews. On his death it passed into the hands of one of the kings of the island, called the Fisherman King; but in Arthur's days it was not known where or how the Holy Graal might be found, until St. Joseph of Arimathea appeared to a hermit and told him about it, and how to the true and pure of heart it would again be visible, and that the sight would be full of healing and blessing to the soul.

Map laid hold of this idea, and set the knights of Arthur on the quest, or search, for the Holy Graal. Here mere bodily strength was nothing, the reward was only to the pure in heart and life; and thus righteousness was raised to its true place, as the greatest glory of manhood.

Another writer of the Keltic stories and Arthur romances must not be forgotten. In the reign of John there was a parish priest in Worcestershire named Layamon. He saw, no doubt, like Map, how these stories could be made to do good service among the people by stirring admiration for what is noble, and he determined to tell them in English, the common tongue of the people, so that their hearts too might be touched by the same enthusiasm. Books then were very scarce, and a poor parish priest had little money to spend upon them; but Layamon was as brave and steadfast in the service he had in hand as any of Arthur's knights. His quest of the books was long and difficult; but at last he returned to his Worcestershire parish carrying the books with him; and then he says with tender joy—"Layamon laid down those books, and turned the leaves; he beheld them lovingly; may the Lord be merciful to him!"

Then he began his work and made a complete English poem, which he called "The Brut." This book has an important place in literature, because it was one of the first books written in English since the Norman Conquest; and it also shows how the old simple earnestness of the English was as vital as the language.

The Arthur legends have come down to us in a collection of them made by Sir Thomas Malory in the reign of Edward IV. And this book was one of the first printed by Caxton, showing how for three hundred years they still retained their hold upon the English people. From this book, called "Morte d'Arthur," we will try to get some idea of these stories.*

We begin with the coming of Arthur. King Uther Pendragon had died, and none knew who should be the next king; so there was great disorder in the land a long

* Many of the legends may be read to children from the Globe Edition of "Morte d'Arthur."

while, for every lord made himself strong, and each hoped to be chosen king. But the blessed Christmas-time drew nigh, the time of peace and goodwill; and Merlin, the bard, counselled the Archbishop of Canterbury to call a great assembly of the people in the greatest church in London, where they might pray the Lord Christ, who had come at Christmas-time to be the King of men, that He would show to them who was the rightful king of the land. After prayers on Christmas Day they saw in the churchyard an anvil of steel, in which was driven a sword; on the sword was written, "Whoso pulleth out this sword is rightful king." But none who tried could move the sword.

On New Year's Day a tournament was held, at which many knights were assembled, but yet none of them could draw the sword from the anvil. Amongst the knights was an old man, Sir Ector, who came with two sons, Sir Kaye and the young Arthur. Sir Kaye had left his sword at home, and he sent Arthur for it. But the lad found the house locked up; and because he would not leave his brother without a sword, he laid hold of the one in the anvil and drew it forth. Then it was plain that young Arthur was the chosen King of England. But the great nobles and lords would not have Arthur for their king. And on Twelfth Day they all met together again, and the sword was placed back into the anvil, and one after another tried to draw it forth, and again Arthur alone could move it. Still angry and dissatisfied, they tried again on Easter Day, but with the same result. Then all the Commons cried that Arthur should be their king, for God had chosen him. So Arthur was made king, and the sword was hung in the church.

This is how Arthur got his famous sword Excalibur. It happened one day that Arthur had fought almost to death with a certain King Pellinore, and after the combat was ended, Merlin, the bard, carried Arthur to a

hermit to be healed of his wounds. Then, when he was well, Arthur found that he had lost his sword; and as they rode he said to Merlin, "I have no sword." "Hereby is a sword that shall be yours," replied Merlin; and presently they came to a lake, which was a fair water and broad, and in the midst of the lake appeared an arm clothed in white samite (silk woven with threads of gold or silver), and in the hand was a fair sword. "Yonder is the sword that I spake of," said Merlin, "and that is the lady of the lake who will give you that sword." Then Arthur saw a damsel going upon the lake, and he spoke to her and said, "Damsel, what sword is that which yonder arm holdeth above the water? I would it were mine, for I have no sword." Then the damsel promised that if he would give her a gift, when at any time she should ask it, he might take the sword. So Arthur and Merlin tied their horses to a tree, and they went into a boat, that the lady of the lake showed to them, and rowed to the sword. Then Arthur stretched forth his hand and took it with the scabbard, and the arm and hand went under the water. With this sword Arthur fought his battles, and drove out the heathen from the land, and set up the right and put down the wrong unto the day of his death.

After Arthur had overcome the kings and lords who had made war against him, and had established his rule in the land, his people wished that he should marry; and it happened that Arthur had seen a lady who he thought was the fairest lady living, and whom he loved above all. This was Guenever, the daughter of King Leodegrance of Cornwall. So he sent to ask her father to let her be his wife. King Leodegrance was pleased at this, and he sent Guenever to Arthur, and, as a present, he sent with her the Table Round, which had been given to him by Uther Pendragon. This table would hold a hundred and fifty knights, but they were all to be chosen men, valiant and true, and tried in service. King Leodegrance sent a hundred good knights

with the Table Round; but he said he could not make up the other fifty, for so many had been slain in his days. King Arthur had great joy at the coming of Guenever and the hundred good knights; and in haste he ordered everything for the marriage and coronation of Guenever to be got ready in the most splendid manner that could be devised. He also desired Merlin to find fifty worthy knights for the Table Round, but only twenty-eight could be found. When they were all come together, the Archbishop of Canterbury was sent for, to bless the sieges or seats in which the knights should sit at the Table Round; and on every seat, it was found afterwards, was the name of the knight who should sit in it, written in letters of gold; but there were two seats more than the number of the knights, and on one of these were seen the words, "The Siege Perilous." All the knights wondered what this could mean; then Merlin told them, that he who should sit in this seat would be the worthiest and highest of them all, for he would be not only strong and brave, but pure in heart and life. And he warned them, that if any one, who was giving way to sin in thought or deed, were to place himself in that seat he would be destroyed; and this was why it was named "The Siege Perilous."

Many days and years went by, and Arthur's knights had many strange adventures, and did many valiant deeds. There were great men among them too, such as Sir Bors, Sir Percival, and especially Sir Launcelot, who was held to be the very chief of knights; still there was none who dared to seat himself in the Siege Perilous, and while that remained empty it was plain that the worthiest and highest knight, the one who had a right to the first place at the Round Table, had not yet appeared.

At length it happened on a time at the Vigil of Pentecost, when all the knights had come to Camelot to keep the festival, that a strange lady entered the hall, and asked for Sir

Launcelot. She told him that he must come with her into a forest, where there was something for him to do, but she could not tell him what it was until he reached the place. There was nothing Sir Launcelot liked so well as to be engaged in some adventure the very risk of which called forth all his courage and skill, and he said at once to the lady, "I will gladly go with you." So they departed, the lady promising he should be back by noon next day, to keep Whitsuntide with the King and Queen and the other knights.

They soon reached the forest, and rode through it till they came into a great valley, where they saw an abbey of nuns. They stopped at the gate, which was opened to them immediately; and as soon as they entered the house they were taken to the room of the Lady Abbess. Presently the door was opened, and twelve nuns came in, bringing with them a beautiful youth, fairer and better made (so Launcelot thought) than any man he had ever seen before. Then the nuns told Sir Launcelot that the young man's name was Galahad, and that they had had him brought to them as a little baby, and they had cared for him and brought him up. Now he was old enough to be made a knight, and they had sent for Sir Launcelot, who was held to be the best knight living, that at his hands the young Galahad might receive knighthood. Sir Launcelot asked if it was his own desire too; to which Galahad answered, "Yes." "Then shall he," said Sir Launcelot, "receive the high order of knighthood at the high festival to-morrow." So very early in the morning of Whit-Sunday, at the hour of Prime (or the first service of the day), Sir Launcelot made Galahad a knight, saying to him, "God make you a good man, for beauty faileth you not as any that liveth."

Then, when prayers were ended, Sir Launcelot rode away, and came by nine o'clock in the morning to Camelot, to keep Whit-Sunday. By that time the King and the

Queen and all the knights were gone to the Minster to the service; so Launcelot too went into the church. After the service was over, they all came into the hall to dinner; but what was their surprise to see written in letters of gold upon the Siege Perilous, "450 years after the passion of our Lord Jesus Christ ought this seat to be filled." Then they found that it was that very year. While they were wondering at this, and taking their places at the table, a squire came into the hall, and cried to the King, "Sir, I bring you marvellous tidings." So the King asked him what they were; and the squire told him that a great stone was floating on the river with a sword sticking in it. 'I will see that marvel," said the King; and he and his knights all went down to the river, where they saw a large stone of red marble floating in the water, in which stone was stuck a bright sword; the handle was wrought with precious stones, and there were these words on it: "Never shall man take me hence, but he by whose side I ought to hang, and he shall be the best knight of the world." Then the King said to Launcelot, "Fair sir, this sword ought to be yours, for I am sure you are the best knight of the world." But Sir Launcelot looked grave, and he answered sadly, "Sir, it is not my sword, and it ought not to hang by my side;" for, brave and strong and skilful as he was in all that belonged to knighthood, he knew that he was not true and pure in heart, and he would not presume to take the sword. Then Sir Gawaine and Sir Percival, who were lighter of thought than Sir Launcelot, tried all they could to pull the sword from the stone, but they could not move it; others also used all their force to draw it out, but no one could take it hence; so it was plain that "the best knight of all the world" was not among the fellowship of the Table Round.

Then the King and the knights returned to the hall to dinner; but scarcely had they seated themselves, when

there entered the hall a good old man, clothed all in white, and with him he brought a fair young knight dressed in flame-coloured armour, but without a sword. The old man led the young knight up to the Siege Perilous; and then there was seen in letters of gold upon it the words, "This is the seat of Galahad, the High Prince." So the young man sat there safely, where none of the most famous of the knights dared to place themselves; and the old man went his way.

Sir Launcelot was more than glad at the coming of Sir Galahad, for it turned out that he was his son, who had been taken when he was a baby to the nuns to be nursed and brought up, and whom he had since lost sight of.

When the dinner was over the King took Sir Galahad to see the sword in the stone, which none of the knights could draw. Then Sir Galahad laid his hand on the sword and lightly drew it out, and hung it at his side. Thus was it shown before all the knights that Galahad was "the best knight of all the world," because faithfulness to God and duty can raise even a youth to greater honour, than can be gained by bodily strength and courage alone, just as the soul is ever higher and greater in its nature and life than the body.

Sir Galahad soon proved that he knew how to be a good knight as well as a good man, for the King appointed a tournament to be held in the meadow at Camelot, and on that day Sir Galahad overcame every knight who entered the lists against him, so that all men greatly wondered at the strength and skill of so young a knight.

At evensong the King and all the knights went to the service in the Minster; and after that to supper in the hall. And now another strange thing happened. While they were seated at the table there came a rolling and crashing as of thunder, so that it seemed as though the house would be shaken to the ground, and then a clear, pure beam of light seemed to stream down the hall; and with this light of heaven shining on them,

the knights, looking at one another, thought each looked fairer than he had ever done before; but no one could speak a word for solemn awe. While they thus looked at one another in silence, the Holy Graal passed before them, covered with white samite. None could see the sacred dish itself, nor how it was borne along through the hall; but the sweetest fragrance filled the air, and each knight found before him just that kind of food which was most pleasant to him, and which best suited him. Then suddenly the light faded, and the holy vessel disappeared.

King Arthur offered thanks to God for the grace He had sent them, and for what He had shown them at this high feast of Pentecost; and then Sir Gawaine cried out that they had not seen the Graal itself, it was so closely covered; and he vowed that the next day he would set out and journey for a year and a day in quest of the Graal, so that he might win a sight of the holy vessel itself, and nearly the whole number of the knights joined him in this vow.

Then began the quest of the Holy Graal, which caused the breaking-up of the fellowship of the Table Round, for of all the knights who set forth on the quest, few lived to return. Some died after many adventures in distant lands; others grew weary of the search and sought their own ease in the countries where they found themselves; others, again, were loth to return home not having achieved the quest. Of them all Galahad alone attained to the full sight of the Graal, for he alone sought it with a pure heart, striving to draw near to God; and in him was the promise fulfilled—"Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." But after Galahad had seen the Graal he said, "Now, blessed Lord, would I not longer live, if it might please Thee, Lord," for he had a great desire to depart and be with Christ. Then he bade farewell to Sir Percival and Sir Bors, who were with him, com-

mending them to God; and to Sir Bors he said, "Fair sir, salute me to Sir Launcelot, my father, and as soon as ye see him, bid him remember how unstable is this world." And kneeling down he began to pray, and then suddenly his soul departed to Jesus Christ, and a great multitude of angels bore his soul up to heaven.

There were days of terrible trial and sorrow for King Arthur after his knights were gone. The heathen in greater numbers were pouring into the land, the fellowship of the Round Table was no more, and, worst of all, those whom he most loved and trusted were false and treacherous to him. His foes gathered an army, and he met them with a few faithful followers. A desperate battle was fought, in which Arthur was defeated and sore wounded. Only two knights remained to him, and he begged one of them to carry him to the water-side, where a dark boat was seen with three queens in it. They took Arthur into the boat, and sailed away to the island of Avalon, where Glastonbury now stands.

The old legends used to say that Arthur did not die, but was always alive and ready to come forth whenever England needed him. And there is a sense in which this is quite true, for the Arthur of the romances was made to represent the highest idea existing at that time of all that is best and noblest in manhood; now as age after age passes on, we learn to know more and more of what God intended us to be, and we are no longer satisfied to be only like the Arthur of the old romances, so Arthur must come again and again, when England needs it, and represent a higher and higher form of manhood, thus ever stirring men to strive after what is better and better. We leave King Arthur now to rest awhile in the peaceful island-valley of Avalon, but we need not bid him farewell, for we shall meet with him again and again in our story of English Literature.

CHAPTER III.

CHAUCER (1328—1400).

THE story of our English Literature has not, until now, told us much about the English people. We have seen that the first English writers were men living apart from the busy, common life of the world in Religious Houses, and though they cared greatly for their fellow-men, and wrote earnest books for their instruction and help, yet they could know little of their daily work and business, and little of the joys of home, its merry laughter or its tender sorrows. In the Norman and early Plantagenet times, we have the chroniclers telling the story of kings and rulers, and the romance writers dreaming their bright dreams of knights and ladies; but kings and rulers, knights and ladies, dwelt in a world of which the merchants, the shopkeepers, the workmen, and labourers knew little beyond the gay outside. Now, however, we are coming to a time when our English Literature begins to strike its roots down into the hearts and lives of the people; and henceforward we shall see how its range widens more and more, till all classes of persons and their interests are included in it. We can easily understand how it is just this which makes any literature strong and lasting, because when a writer speaks of things which only a few people know about and care for, such as the mere outside life and fashion of a certain time, a large number of persons will not be able to read his books, and after awhile they may drop out of sight altogether; but, on the other hand, if a writer speak with clearness and power of what we

all feel and understand, and which belongs to every one, and if he is also true to our common sense of what is right, or beautiful, or touching, or amusing, then not only can every one read his books at the time when they were written, but as long as the world lasts they will never grow old and dull, for every new generation will turn to them with the same delight that their forefathers felt when they first read them.

From the time when our literature begins to express more of the thoughts and feelings and interests of the nation generally, it becomes more and more connected with the life of the nation, and therefore with our history. The story of the life of the English nation, which we call English history, is a story of actions—it tells us what the English people *did* at various times; but the literature of the same time tells us what the English people were feeling and thinking about, and thus we can understand much better why such and such things were done. We may be able, perhaps, to see better this connection between literature and history, if we imagine what it would be to have a dumb companion, how often we should wonder why he did this or went there, and sometimes we might think him foolish or wrong in his actions. But, on the other hand, if we had a friend whom we loved, and who often spoke freely to us of his feelings and thoughts, and of the aims he set before him in life, we should readily understand his actions, and be able to judge them truly. Literature and history together are like such a friend; but history alone is almost like a dumb companion.

We take up the story of our English Literature again somewhere in the middle of the fourteenth century, during the reign of Edward III. By this time the Normans and Saxons had become completely mixed together, so that there were no longer two distinct races living in England, but the two had grown into one nation, with one heart and soul. Now, too, there was but one language spoken in the

common talk of business or of home; the great stream of the First English and the smaller stream of Norman-French had become one, and we shall find that this is so much like the English which we speak to-day, that we can understand a great deal of it without any explanation. The old hatreds now were gone, and with the hatreds the misery and gloom which hatred always must bring with it, and there were love and joy and laughter in the land. The vigour of the people was no longer wasted in the enmity between the conquered and the conquerors, and they had grown strong to strive for freedom, to conquer foreign foes, and to carry on commerce and manufactures. The old English love of truth and duty rose into new life; and we shall find that sturdy voices did not fear to speak out boldly against the corruptions of the Church, the ignorant teaching and evil lives of some of those who professed to be followers of Christ and His Apostles, and to claim help and redress for the poor and oppressed.

In the midst of this time, probably in the year 1328,* there was born in London a little child, who was named Geoffrey Chaucer. His father was most likely a wine merchant, living near the Church of St. Aldermary, in Bow Lane, Cheapside. Very little is known of the life of Geoffrey Chaucer in his early days, but from what we know of him later, we may judge that he must have been a bright, happy boy, full of kindly love for all, with a keen delight in fun, and a hearty enjoyment of all the fair things which God has made for us in this world, making no fuss over trifles or grumbling at little hardships, and, best of all, with a heart turning to God in trust and love, and a strong sense of duty. Of this, however, he no doubt, like other English boys, said but little, and was in fact generally silent and shy in company.

* This date is disputed, but it is the one given on his tomb, and the arguments against it need not be entered on here.

Where Chaucer went to school is not known, but that he made good use of his time there, his after-work plainly shows; and we know from it, too, that he must have spent many a pleasant holiday hour—the winter evenings, perhaps, in Bow Lane, or long summer days in the fields around London—in reading the old poetical romances mentioned in the last chapter. While he was yet young, he began to translate one of these, called the "Roman de la Rose," from the French into English; but he did not finish the translation, for he soon found that he was himself a poet, and that he must put his own thought and feeling into English verse.

So Chaucer wrote poetry, sometimes taking an old story or legend which he had met with in his reading, but giving his own version of it, and telling it so as to carry some of his own sound sense of what was true and right, and his own trust and hope, into the minds of others. The French writers loved the rose of the garden, and made it the emblem of the beauty and splendour of a stately, high-born lady; but as soon as Chaucer began to write poetry, he chose for his favourite flower the little English daisy, with its pure white frill and shining gold within, growing anywhere yet looking always up to heaven, and giving joy to rich or poor, the old man, or the little child; and he made it speak of the truth and purity of all good women. He tells us how, when the month of May was come and the birds sang sweetly all day long, he would leave his books, which he loved so well, and go forth into the fields to see the newly-opened flowers; but he says—

"Of all the flowrès in the mead
Then love I most these flowrès white and red,
Such as men callen daisies in their town.
To them have I so great affection,
As I said erst, when comen is the May,
That in my bed there dawneth me no day,
But I am up and walking in the mead,
To see this flower again the sunné spread,

When it upriseth early by the morrow,
That blissful sight softeneth all my sorrow;
So glad am I, when that I have presénce
Of it, to do it allé reverence,
As she that is of allé flowrés flower,
Fulfilléd of all virtue and honóur,
And ever alike fair and fresh of hue;
And I love it, and ever alike new,
And ever shall till that my hearté die."

And not only did the little daisy live in Chaucer's heart until he died, but he loved, too, through all the years of his long life, the merry May-time, the green fields, the hawthorn hedges white with bloom, the singing of the little birds—all that freshness and gladness which make us rejoice in the spring sunshine, and feel how beautiful God's world is, and what a blessed thing it is to live in it. Chaucer was still a young poet when he left home to go to Court, as attendant upon the young Princes Lionel and John of Gaunt, sons of Edward III. During the year 1358, John of Gaunt—not then "time-honoured Lancaster," but a fine young prince of eighteen—was seeking for his wife the Lady Blanche, daughter of Henry, Duke of Lancaster; and it was probably at this time, before the Lady Blanche had quite made up her mind whether she would marry Prince John or no, that Chaucer wrote a poem, called "The Assembly of Foules" (a foule meaning, at that time, any bird). In this poem, Chaucer imagined that on Valentine's Day Dame Nature called before her all the birds of the air to choose their mates. On her own hand Nature carried her favourite, the most beautiful of them all. This was a female eagle (the Lady Blanche). The eagles, as royal birds, were to choose their mates first; and the finest of them all (Prince John) immediately chose the beautiful bird on Nature's hand. But two other eagles had also fixed on her, and great disputing arose among the birds as to which should have her. At

last it was left to her to decide; and then Nature strongly advised her to favour the suit of the fine young eagle who had spoken first, saying all sorts of things in his praise, as that he was the wisest, the worthiest, and true as steel; but the lady eagle declared that she could not make up her mind at once, and must wait a year.

The next year the Lady Blanche became the wife of John of Gaunt, both of them being then nineteen. They were married in May, and in October Chaucer joined the army which Edward III. led into France, when the French did not pay the ransom he demanded for their King John. Here Chaucer was taken prisoner, but was soon released by the Peace of Bretigni.

Little is known of the next seven years of Chaucer's life; but he seems to have been still engaged in the service of the king or princes, and it was at Court that he became acquainted with Philippa de Rouet, a young lady-in-waiting on Queen Philippa. Chaucer loved this young lady; and it was for her, probably, that he wrote a poem, full of graceful fancies and fairy story, that he called his "Dream." Her sister was a young widow named Catherine Swynford, and she was governess to John of Gaunt's children. After Chaucer and Philippa de Rouet were married, they were both employed in the household of John of Gaunt. In 1369 the Duchess Blanche died, and Chaucer wrote a poem of mourning for her death, called the "Book of the Duchess." In it he speaks of her constant truth and sweetness, and expresses for her husband his great sorrow and loss.

In 1372 Chaucer was sent to Italy to try and arrange with the Duke of Genoa for the choice of some port in England, to which goods might be sent from Italy for sale to English merchants. This visit to Italy was, no doubt, for Chaucer the realisation of one of the bright dreams of his life; and it certainly remained for ever in his memory

as a vivid impression which could not fade away, for Italy was at that time the very home of literature, and especially of poetry. Three of the great poets of the world had scarcely ended their singing when Chaucer went to Italy, and two of them were still living. These three poets were Dante, Petrarch, and Boccaccio.

Dante had died about fifty years before, but his influence was still felt. He was a man of deep religious earnestness, always living as in the presence of God; yet his heart was saddened by the sight of the angry strife of parties in his country, and by the corruptions and quarrels among Christians; and he ardently desired to see Italy united as one nation, and Christians living as one flock. His great poem was a religious Allegory in three books. The first is an imaginary visit to Hell, to show the misery of sin; the second to Purgatory, to show the power of repentance and possibility of purification; the third to Paradise, to see the blessedness of the righteous. His guide in Paradise is Beatrice, whom he had known on earth from the time when she was a little child, and who all her life through had always appeared to him the perfect ideal of sweetness and goodness; and now he sees her in heaven as the very personification of heavenly love.

Petrarch was living when Chaucer was in Italy. His most celebrated poems are his sonnets addressed to a lady named Laura, whom he chose, after the fashion of the time, to be the heroine of his verses. When Chaucer saw him, he was writing a story, which he related to him, and which we shall also hear told by-and-by.

The third great Italian poet, Boccaccio, was living at Venice at that time, and Chaucer might have seen him too. He wrote stories in poetry; but his chief work was in prose. It was called the "Decameron." This was a collection of a hundred tales, such as had long been told through Italy and other countries, but which Boccaccio now gathered

together into one book. In order to introduce these stories, he supposed that, during the time of the plague in Florence, seven ladies and three gentlemen left the city to take care of itself, and took care of themselves by shutting themselves up in a country house, to which no one was allowed to come for fear of infection. As they sat out of doors under the trees in the garden, they told one another these stories in order to pass the time.

Chaucer had read some of the works of these poets before; but there is no doubt that his visit to Italy made him much better acquainted with Italian literature, for foreign books, and indeed all books, were rare in England at that time, when each copy had to be written with pen and ink. Italian literature was expressed with more skill and better art than any other at that time, and after Chaucer's return from Italy he shows a greater power of expression in his own works. The influence of the Italian poets is also seen in the choice of subjects for his later poems, as well as in many of the ideas contained in them, but the substance is his own; and it is not the Italian poets who are speaking in his verse, but the English poet Chaucer himself, with his love for truth and right, his trust in God, his kind thoughts about his fellow-men, and, as the ever-constant fruit of these, his abiding cheerfulness and hope.

Two of the poems which he wrote after his return from Italy were "The House of Fame," and "The Legend of Good Women." The influence of Dante is shown in the first of these. It is a dream in which the poet sees the House of Fame on a rock of ice. Many names have been cut there, but most of these are already melted, or melting away. Some, however, of the oldest remain still clear and legible. A crowd of persons was pressing into the house seeking fame; but Chaucer himself would not ask for it, content with the giving to his work his best thought and skill.

The idea of the "Legend of Good Women" was taken from a book of Boccaccio's called "Illustrious Women." The thought of Chaucer's book is, however, different from that of Boccaccio's, for the women he celebrates in his poem are not merely illustrious, but—

> "Goodé women, maidenés and wives,
> That waren true in loving all their lives."

While Chaucer was writing poems he was also at work in two Government offices, to which he had been appointed; but in 1385 he was allowed to engage some one to attend to these duties for him. During the latter part of the reign of Edward III., and in the early part of the reign of Richard II., John of Gaunt was in great power, and able to do much for his poet-friend Chaucer, who, when John of Gaunt married Catherine Swynford, became his brother-in-law. But at length a change came. The misrule of King Richard caused a Commission of Regency to be appointed to inquire into the way the affairs of government had been carried on; and one of the first acts of the commission was to take from Chaucer both his appointments. He was thus deprived of his income, and became very poor; and at the same time his wife Philippa fell sick and died. The ten next years of his life were a constant struggle with poverty; and though he had sons, yet the loss of his wife caused him, no doubt, many an hour of lonely sorrow. He was growing old too now, passing from sixty to seventy,* an age when persons desire rest; yet it was during these very years that he set to work upon his best and greatest poem, the "Canterbury Tales;" and throughout the whole of that work, there is never one word of grumbling at life, no bitter feeling at his change of fortune, and no lessening of his firm faith that God rules all things in the wisest love.

* Supposing him to have been born in 1328, the date given on his tomb.

In 1399 John of Gaunt died, and the same year his son, Henry IV., became king, and Richard II. was deposed. One of the first acts of the new king was to care for his father's old friend Chaucer. He gave him money, and Chaucer took a house in the garden of St. Mary's Chapel, Westminster. He was still writing the "Canterbury Tales," but he did not live to finish them. He was now seventy-two; and one day he wrote these words in one of the tales:—"The body of man, that once was sick and frail, feeble and mortal, is immortal, and so strong and so whole that there may nothing impair it. There is neither hunger, nor thirst, nor cold; but every soul replenished with the sight of the perfect knowing of God. This blissful reign may men purchase by poverty spiritual, and the glory by lowness, the plenty of joy by hunger and thirst, rest by travail, and life by death and mortification of sin. To this life may He us bring, who bought us with His precious blood. Amen."

Here Chaucer laid down his pen; and these words appear to have been the last he ever wrote. He died on the 25th of October, 1400, in his house in the Chapel Garden at Westminster, and his body was laid to rest within the Abbey.

The "Decameron" of Boccaccio perhaps first suggested to Chaucer the idea of writing the "Canterbury Tales." He had met with many stories in the course of his reading and during his travels abroad, and he wished to collect these together. But his plan was different from that of the Italian poet; instead of the ten ladies and gentlemen, anxious to save themselves, and who were amusing themselves while their friends and neighbours were in terrible sorrow and suffering, Chaucer has a number of persons from every class of English life, and who were journeying together on what was then thought to be a good and religious purpose.

In the part of London called Southwark, there stood in

Chaucer's days an inn with the sign of the "Tabard." The road from London to Canterbury passed the end of the High Street, in which stood this inn; and many of the pilgrims, who came from every part of England to go and pray at the tomb of Thomas à Becket, used to put up for the night at the "Tabard."

Chaucer describes himself as going there one bright spring evening, just when everything is so fresh and lovely that people long to travel about. We can fancy the old inn, with its square courtyard, and the gallery of carved wood around it, and the quaint lattice-windows, the little panes of which shine and twinkle in the setting sun. And there is the host, Harry Bailey, a fine, strong, busy man, making everybody welcome with a cheerful word, and lending a helping hand to all.

By degrees the pilgrims came riding into the courtyard, and before the evening closes nine-and-twenty have arrived besides the poet himself. Then comes the supper; and they all sit down together around the long table in the room known as the pilgrims' room. There is lively talk as the supper goes on, and the host declares they are the best company of pilgrims that have come into the "Tabard" that year. He then proposes that on the morrow, as they ride to Canterbury, they should each tell two stories, and as they return two more; and the one who tells the best should have a supper given him by the rest when they put up at the "Tabard" on their way home. They all agreed to this, and Harry Bailey said that he himself would ride with them and judge of the tales.

Early the next morning the long troop of pilgrims might have been seen coming forth through the gateway of the "Tabard," and riding down the High Street into the Canterbury road. As they pass along in the May sunshine, or under the flickering shade, we see how all kinds of English

life are to be found in the long procession journeying onwards to the house of God. There is the knight, dressed in a short coat of fustian, still stained with the coat of mail he had lately worn over it in the wars. In fifteen mortal battles he had been, and had fought for the cause of Christ in Palestine and in Turkey. From the time he first rode forth to battle he had always loved chivalry, truth, honour, freedom, and courtesy; and though so fearless and strong that no foe can stand against him, yet he was—

> "meek as is a maid,
> He never yet no villainy ne'er said
> In all his life, unto no manner wight:
> He was a very perfect gentle knight."

With him is his son, a young man of twenty, strong and well-grown, with curling hair, and dressed in a green coat embroidered all over with flowers red and white. All day long he is singing and playing the flute, and is as fresh and gay as is the month of May. He rides well, can make songs, joust, dance, draw, and write. And, more than these, he has done good service in the wars in Flanders, Artois, and Picardy—

> "And borne him well as of so little space,
> In hope to standen in his lady's grace.
> Courteous he was, lowly, and serviceable,
> And carved before his father at the table."

With the knight and the squire is their single retainer, a yeoman dressed in green, with a mighty bow, and a horn hanging at his girdle.

Another group is composed of a prioress, a nun, and three priests. The prioress is called Madame Eglantine; she is a tall slender woman, with grey eyes and a wide forehead, a straight nose, and a small mouth. Her dress is the perfection of neatness. Every fold of her cloak hangs in its proper place, and there is not a crumple in her closely

crimped frill. She has a string of coral beads on her arm, and a gold brooch in the shape of the letter A, and a crown over it with the motto, "Amor vincit omnia" ("Love conquers all"). She speaks French fluently, not the French of Paris though, but French as spoken at Stratford le Bow; and she can sing very sweetly—"intuned in her nose"—which was perhaps also the style of Stratford le Bow. Her manners are graceful and pleasant, and her behaviour at table remarkable for the neat and cleanly way in which she takes her food. She is gentle and tender-hearted, would cry if she saw a poor little mouse hurt in a trap; and she keeps little dogs, which she pets and feeds—

> "With roasted flesh, and milk, and wastel bread,
> But sore she wept if one of them were dead,
> Or if men smote it with a yew-rod smart,
> And all was conscience and tender heart."

Among the company we also see a monk, a friar, and a pardoner. The monk, a powerful man, delighting in active life, a mighty hunter, with many a good horse in his stable. The friar, professing poverty, but dressed in a cope of double worsted, the best beggar in his house, getting a farthing even from a poor widow, and teaching that the best proof of repentance is to give money to the friars. The pardoner, just come back from Rome, carries before him on his horse a wallet "brimful of pardons come from Rome all hot;" in his trunk he has a pillow-case, which he says is the Virgin Mary's veil; and a glass of pig's bones, which he shows as the bones of the saints—

> "Well could he read a lesson or a story,
> But best of all he sang an offertory."

Turning from these, we see among the pilgrims, too, the good parish priest, the poor parson, only "rich in holy thought and work." He is a learned man, and a faithful preacher of Christ's Gospel. He does not seek to get money

from his people, but gives even of his poverty to those who are in need. His parish is large, the houses far apart, but no bad weather prevents him from setting forth on foot, his staff in his hand, and going to see any who are sick or need his help and counsel. His diligence is wonderful, and not less so his patience under vexations and trials. A noble example he sets to his flock in that he first works out the truth in his life, and afterwards teaches it to his people. He seeks no pomp nor reverence for himself or his office, and he invents no ideas of right and wrong; he teaches only "the love of Christ and His Apostles twelve, but first he followed it himself."

With the parson is his brother, a ploughman, as good and true a workman in his calling as the parson. He loves God with all his heart, and his neighbour as himself. He often worked for a poor man without payment, doing it for Christ's sake.

But there are many other pilgrims riding past, and we must not stay too long with these. There is the Franklin (or the country gentleman, as we should now call him)—the sheriff of the county, with a fresh, rosy face and a "beard as white as a daisy;" in his house "it snowed of meat and drink," and all were welcome to his table. And there is the doctor of physic; and the sergeant-at-law; and the weather-browned, west country sailor; and the wife of Bath, with her broad hat and scarlet stockings; and the sturdy miller in his white coat; and the merchant, with his forked beard and high peaked hat, mounted upon a high horse; and a London cook, and a haberdasher, a weaver, a dyer, a carpenter; nor must we forget the clerk of Oxenford, the poor scholar, whose story we must presently listen to. He rides a horse the bones of which stand out like the teeth of a rake, and he himself looks worn and hollow; his cloak is threadbare, for whatever money he gets he spends on books, and the only return he can make to those

who help him in his studies is to give them his prayers. Yet he has travelled to foreign universities, and though, as his story lets us know, he has suffered disappointment and trial, he has sources of happiness within, in his love of knowledge, his sympathy with the great men of other times, and in his patient trust in God.

As soon as the procession of pilgrims is fairly on its way lots are drawn to decide who shall tell the first story. The lot falls to the knight, who tells his tale, and is then followed by others, each story being of course appropriate to the kind of person telling it. It is at length the turn of the Oxford student, who tells the story of Grisildis, a tale he had heard, he says, from Petrarch, the poet, in Italy:—

"PATIENT GRISILDIS.

"In the west of Italy there is a country called Saluces, and there was once a marquis of that land whose name was Walter. Now this Walter was fond of pleasure, and spent most of his time in hunting and hawking, taking little thought or heed about the ruling of his country. The best of his people were sad at this, and wished that he would marry a good wife, for if he died they did not know what foreign prince might be placed over them as his successor. So they came to him, and one of the wisest of them told him of their wish, and they offered to choose a wife for him. But Walter said he would consent to have a wife, only he would rather choose her for himself, and he would fulfil their wish quickly, on condition that whomever he might marry they would receive her and respect her always as an emperor's daughter. They promised this, and then he fixed a day for his wedding. Now, not far from the palace was a small village, and among the poorest of the poor folks living there was an old man named Janicola. He had a daughter called Grisildis, a fair young maiden, as pure and beautiful

in character and mind as in outward form, for enclosed within her was great reverence and love, a steadfast courage, a fast hold of truth and duty, and through these a strength of obedience and of diligence. She honoured and tenderly cherished her poor old father, working for him by keeping sheep, and spinning as she watched them. The marquis had often observed Grisildis as he rode past in hunting, and now when the people wished him to take a wife he made up his mind that he would have none other but her. He did not say to any one that he was going to ask Grisildis to be his wife, but he had all kinds of beautiful dresses made, and bought the loveliest jewels for his intended wife, and every one wondered whoever the lady could be.

"At last the day came which he had fixed for his wedding. In the morning Grisildis, little thinking of what was going to happen to her, went early to the well to get water; there she heard that the marquis was to bring home his bride that day, and so she hurried back to get everything done in the house as quickly as possible, in order that she might come out and see the new marchioness; but, just as she was going in with her water-pot in her hand, the marquis, attended by his suite, came up, and to the surprise of every one stopped at the little cottage. 'Where is your father, Grisildis?' said the marquis gravely. 'My lord, he is here,' replied Grisildis humbly, and she went and fetched him. Then the marquis took the old man by the hand, and told him how he wished to have Grisildis for his wife. Janicola was so surprised and overcome that he could say nothing but 'My lord, your will is always mine.' But the marquis said that he wished also to ask Grisildis if it pleased her to be his wife; so he and her father went into the little room where she was, and there he said to her, 'Grisildis, it is your father's will and mine that you should be my wife, but do you assent to it or not? If you do, will you promise to be always ready with good heart to obey my will in all things, without question or

delay?' And to this Grisildis answered, 'My lord, I am not worthy of the honour you offer me, but if it is your will and my father's I will consent to be your wife, and I will promise never willingly in word nor thought to disobey you.' 'That is enough, Grisildis mine,' said the marquis; then he led her to the door, and said to the people, 'This is my wife that standeth here, let whoever loves me love and honour her: there is no more to say.'

"Some ladies now came, and took Grisildis in, and dressed her in one of the beautiful dresses the marquis had had made for her; and they put on her the jewels, and a crown upon her head; and then they brought her out, and all the people wondered at her loveliness. She was placed upon a snow-white horse, and taken to the palace, and that day the marquis and Grisildis were married. The people soon found that though the marquis had chosen a lowly maiden for his wife, he had made a good choice; for good and dutiful as she had always been, yet her new life served to bring out in her many noble qualities she had had no exercise for before. She showed herself so wise in action, so eloquent of speech, so full of dignity, and yet so kind and true, that every one loved her; and her fame spread not only in Saluces, but in distant lands. There was no discord she could not set at rest, no grievance she could not find some means to redress, so that the people said she was sent from heaven to save and help them, and to amend every wrong.

"After a while she had a little daughter; and it was still a young baby when a strange thought came into the mind of the marquis. Grisildis had not forgotten the promise she had made to obey her husband in everything; but she loved him, and hitherto everything had been so bright and smooth that she had never found it hard to keep her promise. Now the marquis thought he should like to know whether she would still be so

dutiful and loving if he asked her to do something very painful and hard; and he could think of nothing that would be more so than to tell her to send away her dear little baby. So one day he told her, that though she was dear to him, his nobles still much disliked his having married a peasant maiden, and that since their little girl was born there had been more discontent than ever among them; and therefore he thought it would be better, for the sake of peace, to send the child away. Yet he would not do it without her consent.

"To this Grisildis answered, that both she and her child belonged to him, and that nothing he thought right to do could be displeasing to her, as long as she did not lose him, and that neither length of time nor death could change her from this mind.

"That evening a rough man came to her, as she had her little child in her arms, and told her he was come at the command of the marquis to take it away. At first she sat silent and still, unable to speak a word or to move; then just as the man was carrying away the baby, she begged him to let her kiss the child again, and holding it to her bosom, she began to kiss it, and said in her sweet voice, 'Farewell, my child, I shall never see thee again. But since thou hast been marked with the cross of our Father Christ, who died for us upon a cross of wood, to Him, my little child, I commit thee.' Then holding the child in her arms towards the man, she said, 'Here, take again your little maid.'

"The man brought the child to the marquis, who secretly sent it to his sister, the Countess of Panak, with directions that it should be carefully nursed and brought up. He then watched Grisildis, to see if he could discover any change in her, but she was in all things 'as glad, as humble, as busy in service and in love, as she was wont to be,' only she never once spoke one word of her daughter.

"It was four years after this when Grisildis had a little son; there were great rejoicings when he was born, because he was the heir, and would succeed his father as marquis and ruler of the land. But when he was about two years old, the marquis one day told Grisildis that he found there were great murmurings among his people about this child, for they were all indignant at the thought that the grandson of the poor Janicola should be their lord, and reign over them; and that in order to avoid a tumult, he thought it best to send away the little boy, as he had done with his sister. To this Grisildis again made answer, that his wish was always hers, and that if she knew that her death would bring him ease, most gladly would she die, for death was nothing to her compared with his love. That night the little boy was taken away, and secretly sent also to the Countess of Panak, where the little girl was now growing up. Some years passed by, and no change could the marquis find in the love and truth of Grisildis, only if it were possible she was more true in love and service as she increased in years. But at length the thought came into the mind of the marquis that he would try whether Grisildis loved him for himself, or only for the sake of being the marchioness, and having the first place among the ladies of the land, and living in state and luxury; so he told her that though he loved her truly, he could not do as the common people did, and have whom he liked best for a wife, for the old discontent at his marriage had grown stronger and stronger among his people, until the Pope at last, in order to appease the tumult, had sent a bull, authorising him to send her home, and make another marriage with a lady of rank; and this lady, he said, was on her way to Saluces. Grisildis answered to this, that she knew she was not of fitting rank to be the marchioness, and had ever held herself, not as the first lady of that land, but only as a true and humble

wife; but that since he desired her to return to the lowly state from which he had taken her, she would go back to her father's cottage, leaving behind her all her fine dresses and jewels.

"So that day Grisildis went back to the poor little hut of her father, without asking her husband for money or any of those things which only belonged to her position as marchioness, thus proving that it was not for these things she cared.

"In the meantime the marquis had sent to the Earl of Panak, desiring him to bring to Saluces his daughter (now grown a fair young lady) and his son. On the morning of their arrival he sent to Grisildis to say that the lady of rank, of whom he had spoken, was coming that day; but that he had no one to see that everything was properly prepared for her reception, and he asked her to come to the palace and see that the servants arranged everything as he liked it done. So Grisildis went in her poor dress, and directed and worked until all the house was in order and everything made ready for the reception of the visitors.

"About noon the Earl of Panak with the two children arrived at the palace, and Grisildis busied herself in doing everything for their comfort and welcome; and as the marquis saw her moving about in her homely dress, and the patience with which she bore this last great trial of her love, he could keep it up no longer, but cried out, 'It is enough, Grisildis mine! now know I thy steadfastness, dear wife.' Grisildis heard the words, but she could not take in their meaning, and she stood and stared like some one suddenly waked out of a dream. Then the marquis said, 'This fair young maiden is our daughter and this boy our son; take them again, dear wife.' But Grisildis, who had borne so much with such calm patience, could not bear this sudden great joy, and down she fell in a faint. Then recovering a little, she called both her young children to her and em-

braced them, kissing them tenderly and bathing their faces and hair with her tears. It was a piteous thing to hear her sweet voice thanking God and the marquis that she had her children in her arms again, and those who stood by could only turn away their faces and weep.

"But this was a happy day for all, and it was the beginning of many long happy years, for never again did the marquis doubt his wife's love and truth, but they and their children lived together in great peace and high prosperity; and they fetched home to the palace the old father of Grisildis, and there he dwelt with them as long as he lived."

Chaucer says that we are not to understand by this story that we have any right to make trials for other people, but it is told in order that, by thinking of the beautiful trust and patience of Grisildis, we may be helped to bear the losses and trials, which God sends us in this life, with perfect love and trust, knowing that "He does not willingly afflict nor grieve the children of men," and "tempteth no man."

And, perhaps, Chaucer also wished to show that, in all the love of our lives, there must be trust and patience; for love is worth little which cannot stand any trial, but gives way to anger and displeasure, because we do not understand the conduct of others.

NOTE.—As this is not a critical History of English Literature, the arguments for and against the genuineness of works ascribed to Chaucer have not been taken into account, but those commonly received have been accepted as his.

CHAPTER IV.

GOWER, WYCLIF, AND LANGLAND (1300—1400).

We have seen how the large mind and heart of Chaucer took in all the life of England in his day, and, unlike the old romancers, gave to every class a place in English literature, though he speaks but little of many things that were going on in England at that time. This was not because he did not see or care for what was happening at the time, but because he saw how seeming evil works out good, and he had firm trust that God is really ruling the world in the best way; and this we shall find to be the faith of all our greatest men in English literature.

There were stormy days in England during Chaucer's lifetime, for there were dark clouds in two different quarters; some rising from the corruptions in the Church, and others from the miserable state of the poor. The story of our English Literature has to do with both of these; for, as we have seen, literature is the voice, and history the action of a nation.

Before the days of Chaucer, Englishmen were beginning to cry out at the interference of the Pope of Rome in the English Church, and to complain of the sums of money he exacted from the English nation. But in the time of Edward III. these things had grown worse. The Pope claimed the right of appointing clergy to a large number of English parishes, and he gave the livings often not to Englishmen but to Italians, who could not teach the people, for they did not know a word of English, and, as they liked Italy best, never came to England at all, but received the

income of the livings all the same. Then there were a large number of begging friars who got money from the people, and of pardoners, who went about selling for money pardons for sins. Chaucer has represented these among his pilgrims. At this time the Parliament complained that the money carried out of England to Rome was five times as much as the taxes levied by the king. The covetousness and worldliness of the Pope and the Italian clergy had their effect on the English clergy. They, too, cared little for their people, they sought their own interests and pleasures as the end of life; and had they attempted to teach "the love of Christ and His Apostles twelve," it would have been of little use, since they did not "follow it themselves," and their teaching would have had no authority. But, besides this, they had lowered the commands of God and altered the teaching of Christ, so as to get for themselves more power and more money; and though the sense and conscience of the people told them there was something wrong, they had not got the Bible in their hands to show them wherein the wrong lay The Religious Houses were no longer what they had been at first, centres of light and teaching to the poor around them, but were filled with lazy persons, who, because they liked idleness better than work, lived in these houses on the money which had been left at different times to the communities. We can easily see that, at such a time when the clergy cared more "for the fleece than the flock," few would be found willing to teach the poor, to care for them in their sorrows and their sickness, and to live among them as Christ did when He was in this world. That there were some earnest men who, like Chaucer's poor parson, cared more for the work of God than for their own ease and pleasure we know; but, for the most part, those naturally indolent lived in sloth and pleasure, and those naturally active pressed themselves into offices of power about the Court and king.

We must now see what was the state of the poor at this time. In the year 1348 a most terrible disease called the black death appeared in Europe, and at the end of the year passed over England. So fatal and so infectious was this disease, that during the next few years more than half of the people of England died of it. Amongst the deaths the larger part were of the poor, and the effect of this was that there were not enough labourers left to plough the fields and sow and reap the corn. The fields remained untilled, and harvests rotted on the ground, while the labourers, finding themselves so much in request, would not work excepting for enormous wages, and bands of peasants would wander from village to village seeking for the farmer who would give them the most money for their work. Meantime food became very scarce, and there was famine in the land. A law was then passed called the "Statute of Labourers." By this law labourers were compelled to work for the same wages which they had two years before the black death came; and they were also forbidden to leave the parish in which they lived to seek for work on pain of imprisonment. This pressed very heavily on the poor, because while their wages were to be the same as before the plague, food was a great deal dearer. Many of the poor were now starving, and the question was stirred among them—"On what right are some richer than others? We are all brothers of the same race, why should some be clothed in velvet and furs, and eat and drink more than they need, while we are perishing of cold and hunger?" This feeling spread and found expression in general discontent and peasant revolts, until the Poll-tax still further aroused the indignation of the labourers, and caused the insurrection under Wat Tyler in the reign of Richard II.

There are three writers of this time who set themselves more especially to seek out what the wrong was which led to these corruptions in the Church, and to the miserable

state of the poor; and not only to find out the root or source of these evils, but they strove with earnest endeavour to seek also for some cure for them, and to point persons to it. These were Gower, Wyclif, and Langland. Their work differs in form, but there is agreement in the conclusions they came to, as we shall see.

John Gower was a country gentleman of Kent, a poet and friend of Chaucer. He had written early in life short poems, and a longer work in French, on the vices and virtues and the right path by which a sinner might return to God; but in 1382, immediately after Wat Tyler's insurrection, Gower wrote a poem in Latin, which he called "Vox Clamantis," or the "Voice of one Crying." He was living at the time in the very heart of the district disturbed by the revolted peasantry; and he says that the crying was the voice of a fresh grief. He sees, as in a dream, the wild passions of the excited people, under the form of raging wild beasts; but he says all the troubles of the time are not the result of chance; the evils in the state are but the fruit of evil at the root. As we sow, so must we reap. Disorder and trouble must always come as the result of unfaithfulness to duty. He then goes through the different classes of society, and asks where has been that failure in duty which has caused the evils of the time. He looks to the Church, and finds there a general forsaking of the teaching of Christ, and of the true ideal of life, as He set it forth in His own character and life. In the soldier class he finds that vainglory, and not the service of God, is the aim of the knights and soldiers. The merchants are guilty of frauds; the lawyers of injustice and corruption by bribes. The servants are greedy and unfaithful, working for gain and with no sense of duty; the peasants are ignorant of God, and live like beasts, discontented, because they cannot feed like a lord. The world is a good world, if people will only live in it by the laws of God its King. He does not con-

demn the guiltless, but if each correct his own fault, then the world is mended.

Another writer of the time, John Wyclif, saw the state of England to be much as Gower had described it, and felt, like him, that the disorders and troubles of the time were but the results of disobedience to God's laws, and the forsaking of the real teaching of Christ.

John Wyclif was born in Yorkshire about 1324. Very little is known of him until, in 1361, we find him Master of Balliol College, Oxford. Seeing, like Chaucer's parish priest, that—

> "If gold rust, what should iron do?
> For if a priest be foul, on whom we trust,
> No wonder is a ruder man should rust"—

Wyclif began to attack boldly the corruptions in the Church; the idleness and selfishness of the clergy, the teachers of the people. He gathered around him the students at Oxford, and lectured to them on the teaching of Christ, and he wrote against the begging friars and the exactions of the Pope. In 1365 the Pope claimed tribute from England, which had been unpaid for thirty-three years. Edward III. and the Parliament refused this demand, and Wyclif wrote a Latin tract called "De Dominio Divino," or the "Kingdom of God." In it he showed that God is the King of the world; He has given power to many persons to rule, to kings quite as much as to the Pope; but each man's conscience must be subject to God alone. The wealth of the Church belonged to God and the people of England, and might be used in any way for God's service and the good of the nation.

This roused the opposition of the Church at once against Wyclif, and he was summoned to appear before the Bishop of London; but at that time John of Gaunt was the leader in the opposition of the king and nobles to the demands of the Pope, and he went himself with

Wyclif before the Bishop of London, so that no trial took place.

In the meantime Wyclif had been made Professor of Divinity at Oxford; and besides lecturing there, he was doing his very best to meet the evils of the time by working in the way in which Christ first began to set up the kingdom of God upon earth. He sought to bring teaching and light to the poor and ignorant among the people; and he did this in two ways. He taught a number of good earnest men the simple truths of Christ's teaching, and then he sent them out to journey about from village to village, that they might talk with the poor people in their own plain, homely way, and teach them the true Gospel of Christ; besides this, he set to work to translate the Bible into the English of that day.

In 1376 Wyclif had the living of Lutterworth, in Leicestershire, given to him. Here he worked hard as a diligent, patient, parish priest. It is thought that Chaucer, who, from his connection with John of Gaunt, must have known Wyclif, had him in his mind when he described the parish priest among the Canterbury Pilgrims:—

> "The good man of religión
> That was a pooré parson of a town,
> But rich he was of holy thought and work.
> He was also a learned man, a clerk;
> That Christés gospel truly wouldé preach,
> His parishens devoutly would he teach."

As Wyclif went on translating the Bible and searching simply and honestly for the truth, he saw more and more how much the Church of that time had departed from it; and in his later works he not only attacked the evil lives and practices of the clergy, but pointed out very plainly where the teaching of the Church differed from the teaching of Christ. He thus began to take the first

step in freedom of thought, or of each man trying earnestly to find out the truth for himself; and we shall see in the future story of our English Literature how this becomes the very spring of its vigour, freshness, and strength, and the means by which our literature advances onward and onward in the way of truth. But at the time when Wyclif spoke and wrote the honest convictions of his own mind, rather than the teaching of the Church, it seemed something outrageous that any man should set out to seek truth for himself instead of taking as truth whatever was taught on the authority of the Church. The clergy were for the most part already his enemies, on account of his attacks on their greediness and love of power; and now he no longer had the support and protection of the nobles. Wyclif's independence of thought was so new to them that they were alarmed at it; even stout old John of Gaunt was frightened, and he bade Wyclif be silent. The peasant revolt, turning as it did against the upper classes and the Church, made the two again friends; and when, in 1382, Wyclif was summoned by Courtney, Archbishop of Canterbury, to answer for the doctrines taught in his books, condemnation was pronounced upon him and his writings, and he was deprived of his professorship at Oxford.

One of the most important works of Wyclif's life was the translation of the Bible into the English tongue, and during the next two years he was busied in completing and revising this. In 1384 he received a summons from the Pope ordering him to appear at the Papal court in Rome to answer the charges brought against him. Wyclif was an old man now, and in feeble health, but his courage was as strong, and his utter trust in the power of truth as steadfast, as in his more vigorous years. He sent a bold answer to the Pope; but his work was done, and the eventide had come. It was Christmas week when, as he was celebrating the Holy Communion in his church at Lutterworth,

he was struck with paralysis, and on the last day of that year God called His good and faithful servant to enter into the joy of his Lord.

While Wyclif was doing his work as the faithful parish priest, teaching the people, and struggling manfully against the corruptions which were destroying the life of the Church, he had a brave fellow-worker who is more directly connected with the story of our English Literature than Wyclif himself. This was William Langland, the writer of one of the most remarkable poems of that age. Very little is known of his life, and even the place and year of his birth are uncertain. Some part of his early years was certainly spent in the neighbourhood of the Malvern Hills, and he may have been educated in the Priory school at Malvern. Later we find him in London, gaining his livelihood as a singer in religious services.

His life in some way brought him into acquaintance with nearly every class of the English people of that day, and he saw and felt deeply the evils and misery of the time. But, like the true man he was, he did not sit down to sneer and grumble without doing his part to find out the reason of the wrong, and to set it right. He tried to put clearly before the eyes of English people how all misery comes from error and wrong-doing, and then to point them to Christ in His human nature laying aside His glory and coming down to us, as the guide to truth and right-doing. He meant his poem for all classes of the English people, so he wrote it in language familiar to the poor and unlearned; and he took up the old First English fashion of using several words in a line beginning with the same letter, as—

"A fair field full of folk found I there."

Here nearly every word begins with *f*. And in the line—

"Than truth and true love is no treasure better,"

the letter *t* is repeated.

Langland called his poem the "Vision of Piers Plowman." Throughout the poem Piers Plowman represents the Divine light and life of God in a lowly outward form such as the world despises. Thus Piers Plowman is at first the simple poor man, rich in the Divine knowledge God reveals to him; and afterwards Piers Plowman stands for the Divine Son of God Himself in the lowly form in which He became a man, and lived and taught and died on earth. The "Vision of Piers Plowman" is the vision of God's truth and love revealed to men, not in the power and wealth of the world, but in simple things, where there is nothing to take men's eyes from the glory and beauty of "truth and true love."

Langland begins his poem by fancying himself wandering over the Malvern Hills, "as a shepe" (or as one of the flock of the people) "in a somer seson whan soft was the sonné." Then he became weary, lay down on the grass, and fell asleep; and as he slept he dreamed that he saw spread out before him "a fair field full of folk." This field, stretching wide from east to west, represents the world; in the far east rose the Tower of Truth, and in the dim west "Death dwelt in a deep dale." Upon the field was a crowd of persons, all manner of men, "working and wandering as the world asketh"—that is, every one seeking in different ways his own interest, ease, gratification, and pleasure, without Truth and Love. There were labourers, traders, courtiers, hermits, priests and friars, minstrels and singers, all selfish and covetous; and there was misery in the land, famine following on waste and sloth, revolt and disorder on wrong and injustice; for Langland, like Gower, shows how the misery and evil of the time come from the forsaking of Duty.

While the poet imagines himself to be thus looking down on "all the wealth of this world and the woe both," a lady appears to him; she has come from the Tower of

Truth in the East, and she tells him her name is Holy Church. He asks her what all this means, and she begins to tell him how all these people whom he sees on the plain before him are seeking only the things of this world; and she bids him teach them "Than Truth and True Love is no treasure better." When he asks what Truth and True Love are, she replies, "To love the Lord best of all, and to die rather than do any deadly sin, this is Truth, and if any can teach thee better, let him do it. Love is the most sovereign salve for soul and body; love is the plant of peace and most precious of virtues. God the Father loved us, and His love came down from heaven in the person of Christ His Son, to suffer and die for our misdeeds and to amend us all. So also ought love to be the rule of our lives, and not self-interest."

Then the dreamer asks the lady how he may know Truth from Falsehood. She bids him look on his left hand, and there he will see "Falseness and Flattery and fickle-tongued Liar." He looks, and with them he sees a woman richly clothed and crowned, and with rings on every one of her fingers. The lady tells him that her name is Meed. She represents in the poem earthly gain or reward, which those who live for self-interest seek as the chief good. She is to be married the next day to Falsehood, and thus the pair, Falsehood and Meed, stand as contrasts to Truth and True Love. But the next day Theology, or religious teaching, forbade that Falsehood should have Meed, and appeal was made to the King in London to settle it. Much disputing went on at Court with regard to Meed; but the King took counsel with Conscience and Reason; and Falsehood, warned by Dread that the case was going against him, fled to the Friars. The first dream of Langland closes at Court, and describes the evils and wrong-doing of the world of his day.

The second dream begins the work of reforming these

evils. Langland sees again the same "fair field full of folk;" Reason and Conscience have stood forth, and are preaching loudly to the people; as they speak the people begin to stop in their eager seeking for earthly things and to listen to them. Then comes Repentance, and goes among them from one to another, till there is a general confession of sin, and thus the first step to reformation is gained. Pride first, and then Envy, Wrath, Avarice, Gluttony, and Sloth, each acknowledge to the common every-day forms of these sins, such as the people were really guilty of in their actual lives, and which had caused much of the miseries of the times. Then Repentance prays for them, and Hope blows on a horn, "Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven;" while the saints in heaven join the sinners on earth in singing, "How excellent is thy loving-kindness, O Lord." A thousand men now cry together to Christ, that he would make known to them the way to Truth; for none of them knew the way. A Palmer, who had been to nearly every shrine in every country of Christendom, is asked if he does not know the way; but he says he never heard of such a saint. Just then a Ploughman says suddenly that he knows Truth as naturally as learned men know their books. He has pledged himself to serve Truth for ever, and has been his follower these forty years. He works for Truth, and he says he is the best master that any poor man knoweth. Whoever wishes to know where Truth dwelleth, he will tell him. The Ploughman thus appears as the simple outward form in which God's Truth is made known to men. Another step is here gained towards reformation when the people (who had been roused by the voice of Reason and Conscience, and who had wept with Repentance) ask Piers the Plowman to show them the way to Truth. But now comes the point at which many stop short; for Piers Plowman begins to explain that they must all go through Meekness till they come to

Conscience, whom they must love as their lord, and rather die than disobey him. They must then follow the brook till they come to the ford "Honour your Fathers," and, passing on, would reach "Swear not at all," and the field "Covet not." Near by they would see two stocks, "Steal not" and "Slay not;" but they must leave these and begin to mount the hill "Bear no false witness," pressing on through a forest of florins, not one of which must they touch; then they would reach the Castle of Truth. The moat around it is Mercy, the battlements are of Christendom. It has a roof, not of lead, but of love and loyalty, and a bridge across the moat called "Pray-well-and-the-better-speed." The gate is kept by the porter Grace and his man Amend-all.

When the people hear that the road to Truth is by the way of God's commands, they are not so anxious to seek it, but begin, like the men in the parable, to make excuses, and one goes away to see how he likes a piece of ground he has bought, another to drive his new yoke of oxen, a third has a wife who would not like to part with him for a while. Then Piers the Plowman tries if any will work faithfully at a half-acre he has to plough and sow by the wayside. There are some who will not even do their daily work well for God's sake, they are wasters and idlers who take their ease, but say they will pray for Piers and his ploughing, that God of His grace will multiply the grain and reward his toil. "Your prayers would help, I hope, if ye were true," said Piers. Many, however, helped Piers at his ploughing, and the knight said, "that though he could not plough he would fight for Piers and the faithful workers and defend them." Then Hunger came and punished the idlers and the wasters, and the poet shows how these sins had helped to bring about the terrible misery of that time. But for the faithful toilers at the work God has given them to do, there comes a pardon from

Truth. This is quite unlike the pardons sold from the Pope, which gave permission to sin again and again; indeed, a friar, who hears it read, says it is no pardon at all, for it only promises eternal life to those that do well.

The next part of the poem describes the search for Dowel, Dobet, Dobest. By Dowel is meant the just and faithful fulfilment of our duty to God and to man. Dobet is all this and more: it represents the overflowing of love into generous, self-forgetful service. Dobest includes the other two, and rises into the teacher and light of men. In the search for these three they are found united in Piers Plowman, who stands for the highest revelation of God in Jesus Christ. In the early life of Christ when He obeyed His parents and worked as a carpenter, He was Dowel. In His latter years on earth, when He went about doing good, loving and caring for the sinful and the suffering, He was Dobet; and when He died for man and gave light and life to the world by the Holy Spirit, He was Dobest.

The search for Dowel, Dobet, Dobest, thus becomes the search for Christ, as the best hope for the world, suffering under the evils and miseries of ignorance and sin; and thus we find the three thoughtful men, Gower, Wyclif, and Langland, reach in different ways the same point in their search for the best help for the evils of the time.

CHAPTER V.

LITERATURE OF THE FIFTEENTH CENTURY.

With the fourteenth century, Chaucer, Wyclif, Gower, and Langland pass away from their work in this world; and we now enter on a period which, at first sight, seems almost a gap in the story of our English Literature; for during the whole of the fifteenth century, no great English writer, like these four, rises to wake the people to a new "love of Truth and Right," or to show them "nobler modes of life." But we must not imagine, however, because our English literature does not burst into any great and splendid blossom, that the life of thought and feeling was dead among the English people. The four great writers of the fourteenth century rested from their labours, but their work went on, and while the kings and nobles were busy fighting the wars of the Roses, the wise, good, and beautiful words of Chaucer, Wyclif, Gower, and Langland were taking root and springing up in many honest hearts.

We find proof of this in the growing concern of the people to find out for themselves the Truth, as God had revealed it; and tracts and poems were written following in the line of Wyclif and Langland, attacking the errors and evils in the Church. The followers of Wyclif formed a body of men called Lollards; and early in the reign of Henry IV. the Statute of Heretics was passed, which condemned to death by burning all writers or teachers who should teach anything different from the creed of the Romish Church. The Lollard persecution, and

the strong influence which the teaching of the Lollards had over the people, called forth one of the best prose works of this century. This was written by Reginald Pecock, Bishop, first of St. Asaph, and afterwards of Chichester. He called his book "The Repressor of Overmuch Blaming of the Clergy." In this book, instead of denying the right of the people to read and think for themselves in religious matters, he set to work to reason with the Lollards; and asserted, that argument, and not persecution, was the true way of meeting error; and that, although the clergy had a power and a right to condemn, they should rather patiently and humbly strive to bring back by conviction those who had left the teaching of the Church. Pecock soon found that his book raised enemies against him on every side; he had written it in plain, simple English that all might read it; but the Lollards would not receive his defence of the Church, and the Church would not accept the idea of reasoning with heretics. Pecock was pronounced by the Church to be a "sickly sheep;" his book was condemned to be burnt, and he himself to be shut up in one room for the rest of his life in the Abbey of Thorney. He was never to have pen or ink again, nor any books but prayer-books and a Bible.

Thus Wyclif and Langland's work lived on, and so also did Chaucer's. Poetry did not die among the English people because there was no great poet. Lydgate wrote poetry, as well as he could, after Chaucer's fashion; and Occleve, a young friend of Chaucer's, followed in the same line. Poetry does not only live in great poems; the daily common life, even of the poorest, is often full of the sweetest poetry; and there are a great number of persons who can clearly see this, and note it down, though they could not plan an epic, nor carry on any long sustained poetic work. And so during this fifteenth century many short poems sprang up like the hedgerow flowers, no one

knowing where they came from, and no one claiming them for his own. These poems were called "ballads." They were stories of some circumstance of life which had a touch of common feeling in it, such as the sense of justice and of liberty in the Robin Hood ballads; the constancy of love in the "Nutbrown Maid;" or the stir of war-spirit in "Chevy Chase." Persons, perhaps, who did not call themselves poets, felt the poetry that lies at the heart of such stories, and turned them into simple verse. The people at once caught the feeling, and learned and sang the ballads in their homes and over their work. It is thought that most of the best ballad-writers were fine-hearted ladies, living in castles and halls, who thus took up the stories of the people and turned them into verse; and there are many touches in them which seem to show a woman's hand.

There were no doubt persons living in the fifteenth century who, when they looked back to the fourteenth and thought of its great writers, said, "The glory of English literature is over." At no period can we truly say this, for the future must always be greater than the past, though we do not always understand what those things are which are making it so; but God knows, and He orders and guides all those forces which move the thought and feeling of the world, and they work as much by His laws as do the forces of nature in the material world. Thus we shall now find that many things were at work at this very time which caused our English literature of the next century to excel in glory that of the past.

The principal of these were the introduction of Greek literature into Europe, the invention of printing, and the discovery of many new countries and races of men in the west.

In 1453 Constantinople was taken by the Turks. This city had long been the capital of the Greek Empire, and in

it were stores of old Greek MSS.—the poetry, plays, histories, and philosophies of the old Greek world. When the Turks became masters of Constantinople, and a little later of Greece, many of the learned Greeks left their country and passed over into Italy, taking with them the treasures of their ancient literature and art. Here they taught Greek to the Italians, and later to other European nations, while the invention of printing occurring about the same time, many copies were made of the Greek MSS., and thus the Greek literature was soon introduced into nearly every country of Europe.

This opening of the treasures of Greek literature to the people of the fifteenth century was like the discovery of a new world. The bold but trained thinking of the Greeks, their beautiful bright fancies, their skill in art, and their greater trust in nature, were all new to the world of the Middle Ages. The philosophy of Plato, more especially, had the deepest attraction for all the nobler and more earnest minds of that time, because it taught so fully the superiority of the soul over the body and of the life of thought and aspiration over that material indulgence into which society had sunk, and which was fostered by the corruptions in the Church. Plato held the idea that the soul before it entered this world had lived in a world where it had known God, the perfection of goodness and wisdom, and had there been surrounded by a perfect state of society, and by the perfection of outward forms of beauty. He thought all persons had a recollection, more or less clear, of all these perfect types, and that it is from this recollection that we derive those ideas of wisdom, goodness, social perfection, and beauty which rise above what we see, or attain to, in this world. The great object of education and of self-improvement, Plato thought, was to preserve and recover these recollections, which were in danger of becoming dimmed or lost by too much contact

with the imperfections of this lower world. To do this, it was necessary to strengthen in every way the life of the soul, for in the union of the soul with the body it was liable, Plato held, to become so oppressed by the bodily life as to lose its higher powers, and be dragged down into a condition in which the pursuit of knowledge and all higher aspirations were lost. The chief duty of life, therefore, was "to bring under the body and keep it in subjection," and at the same time to strive upward with the whole soul towards God, the source of perfect wisdom and goodness. In this way the body became more and more the willing and ready servant of the soul, while the ennobled soul was made fit to enter after death the society of gods and heroes.

The influence of Platonism over literature was purifying and invigorating, and by teaching the need for self-denial and simplicity of life, it brought out in stronger colours the self-indulgence and luxury in the Church. It thus helped to prepare the way for the Reformation, and for a return to the teaching of Christ and His Apostles. For nearly two centuries we shall find Platonism influencing literature, and showing itself also in the religious ideas of those times even amongst persons who had not studied Plato's philosophy.

The Greek exiles who brought into Europe the Greek literature, to which we owe so much, settled first in Italy. There they found a warm welcome from a powerful family which was rising to sovereign rule in Florence. This was the Medici. Cosmo de Medici received the exiles in Florence, and established a college for the special study of the Greek language and literature, and in this school his grandsons, Lorenzo and Giuliano, were students.

In 1469 Lorenzo, then twenty-one years old, became the head of the Republic of Florence. He was a man of genius and learning, and liked to gather around himself as a centre all the intellectual life of the time. Under his rule and patronage a new Italian literature arose, which was

mainly inspired and influenced by the Greek literature, although the writers often kept to the old subjects—love sonnets and stories of chivalry. One new form of story arose, however, at this time, which may be traced more directly to the influence of the Greek literature, and that was the "Pastoral," a tale of simple shepherd life. The first writer of this kind of story in modern literature was Poliziano, one of the poets of the Court of Lorenzo de Medici. He called his poem "Orfeo," or Orpheus. He had many imitators; and we shall see later on that the "Pastoral" appears in our English literature. Two other Italian poets must also be mentioned here, though they are later than the time of which we are speaking, because they became, as it were, the crowning flowers of this period of intellectual vigour and bright fancy in Italy. These were Ariosto, who, in the beginning of the sixteenth century, wrote a poetical romance, called "Orlando Furioso," and Tasso, who wrote towards the end of the sixteenth century a good poem on the deliverance of Jerusalem from the Turks in the old Crusading times.

It was in the last years of the fifteenth century that Columbus sailed to the west and found the New World; and when he had showed the way, many followed, so that nearly every year ships came home laden with strange new things, and the mariners had many a wonderful story to tell about the people who lived in these distant lands, whose whole way of living and character were so different from anything known in Europe.

We must now take up the story of our English Literature again where we dropped it, in order to see those influences at work, which soon were to be like the sunshine and the rain in spring-time, causing the plants to bud and blossom and cover the land again with fresh flowers.

The Wars of the Roses were now over, and there was peace in England again. Caxton had set up his printing

press at Westminster, and there he printed copies of the poems of Chaucer and Gower, and the old Arthur stories, besides many other English works of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, and these, people bought and read with eagerness. Thus the influence of Chaucer, Gower, Langland, and Wyclif was living in England when Henry VII. came to the throne; and the sixteenth century begins with two poets who still worked under their influence. These were Stephen Hawes and John Skelton. Hawes wrote an allegory called "The Pastime of Pleasure," which had in it an earnest, religious purpose. Skelton also wrote an allegory; but the teaching of Wyclif and Langland was working among the people, and Skelton soon cast off the style of writing, which since Chaucer's time had been the fashion, and began to write plain, strong, bold satires on the evils in the Church—the pride, luxury, and ambition of the clergy, and especially of Wolsey. The chief of these were: "Why come ye not to Court?" an attack on Wolsey; "Colin Clout," expressing the voice of the poor on the evils in the Church; and the "Speke Parrot," in which a parrot was supposed to repeat all the talk he heard going on around him about Wolsey and the king.

The accession of Henry VII. brings us to the introduction of Greek learning into England, an event of the deepest importance in our story of English Literature. In 1491 Grocyn began to teach Greek at Oxford. He had gone to Italy, and had learnt it there from one of the Greek exiles, and from Poliziano, the poet. A little later another Englishman, named Linacre, also studied Greek at Florence, and returned to teach it at Oxford. We have seen how one result of the Greek literature was to give new life to the imagination, and lead to the production of new poems and romances. This had been its effect in Italy; but we have said that it also roused men

to think more, and instead of taking everything good or bad, just as they found it, it made them more earnest in seeking to find out what was really true and right. This was its first effect in England and Germany. The questions of how far the Church had departed from the teaching of Christ, and of what was the Truth, had been stirring men's minds in England ever since the days of Wyclif; and now the knowledge of Greek was used at once by the English scholars to help them in the great work of finding out again what was the truth which Christ had taught to the world. The New Testament had been written in Greek, and here they could read the very words of the Evangelists and Apostles. In 1499 John Colet returned from the brilliant Court of Lorenzo de Medici, in Florence, to lecture at Oxford on the Greek Testament with the earnestness of a man who loves the truth in his very soul. The great subject of his teaching was Christ as the true Light of the world, in whose teaching and life God's truth was to be sought, rather than in the creeds of the Church. So anxious was Colet that even children should thus look up to Christ as their teacher, that when his father, a rich London merchant, died, and left him his property, instead of keeping any of it for himself, he spent it in founding St. Paul's School, which he dedicated to "the child Jesus," and over the gate of the school was an image of Christ as a child, with the words, "Hear ye Him," graven under it. Colet's loving care for the children in this school is shown in words he once wrote to them: "Lift up your little white hands to God for me, who prayeth for you to God." Colet made William Lily, a friend of his, the master of this school. Amongst the students who attended Colet's lectures at Oxford there were two who are more especially connected with the story of English Literature. These were a Dutchman named Erasmus, and an English youth, Thomas More. Erasmus was a man of great learning, who,

unable to pay the expense of a journey to Italy, had come to Oxford to learn Greek. We shall hear of him again, but we must now follow the story of Thomas More. He was the son of Sir John More, a judge, and was born in Milk Street, London, in 1478. As soon as he was old enough he was sent to a school in Threadneedle Street. There was not much to be learnt at schools in those days, and Thomas More was still young when he was taken from school and placed in the household of Cardinal Morton, Archbishop of Canterbury and Lord Chancellor. This was considered also as part of his education, for he had time and opportunities for study, while at the same time he learned how to behave in society, and would hear clever conversation carried on by the first men of the day, who gathered as guests around the Cardinal's table. It was thought good in those days that every one should learn to serve, and Thomas More had to wait on the Cardinal himself, stand behind his chair at table, and do his commands. He would be dressed in the Cardinal's livery, though made of better materials than that worn by the footmen. The Cardinal soon found out what a bright, clever boy Thomas More was; he often drew him into the conversation as he stood behind his chair, and he used to say to his guests, "Whoever liveth to try it, shall see this child here waiting at table prove a notable and rare man." Once, at Christmas-time, a Latin play was being acted at Cardinal Morton's house, and one of the players being absent, More took his part without having learnt it, and he kept up the Latin dialogue with so much fun and wit, that "he made more sport for the company than all the other players besides." When Thomas More was about nineteen Cardinal Morton sent him to Oxford. Here he studied Greek, and entered into the new learning and thought of the time. This led him, as it led many others in England, to an honest, earnest search for truth, trying to find out the right,

and his own individual relation to it, fulfilling thus his own duty, and trusting to the power of Truth to work reformation within the Church, instead of seeking for outward changes. We shall see how throughout his life, even to death, Thomas More was faithful to his own duty in relation to truth.

On leaving Oxford he returned to London to study law at Lincoln's Inn, and at the age of twenty-one he became a member of Parliament. About this time Henry VII.'s daughter Margaret was going to be married to the King of Scotland, and the king sent to the House of Commons to ask them to vote a sum of money for her dower. Thomas More thought it not right to tax the people for this; and fearless of the king's displeasure, he spoke against the vote with so much power, that the House refused it, and the king was told afterwards that this was owing to the speech of a beardless boy. The king was very angry, and for a while Thomas More had to give up his practice as a lawyer. After the death of Henry VII., however, his cleverness soon brought him plenty of work to do, but he would plead for no causes which he thought really unjust, and he would always plead for widows and orphans and the poor without taking any fees.

By this time Thomas More was married. Mr. John Colt, of New Hall, Essex, had two daughters; and More, it is said, liked the younger of the two sisters the best, but because he feared it might hurt the feelings of the elder to find her younger sister preferred before her, he married the elder, and she seems to have made him a good wife. They had four children—three girls, Elizabeth, Cecily, and Margaret, and one boy. Six years after their marriage, Thomas More's wife died; and a few years later he married a widow who had a daughter named Margaret. About the same time he took into his family

an orphan girl who had no one to take care of her, and whom he treated as one of his own daughters. Her name was Margaret Giggs.

Sir Thomas More built for his family a most pleasant, comfortable house on the banks of the Thames at Chelsea. It stood about a hundred yards from the river, at that part where Battersea Bridge now crosses the Thames, and the lawns and gardens sloped down to the water-side. It had in front a large porch, and four bay windows, with eight casements between. Here everything was provided for the best good and happiness of his family, and never was there a brighter and happier home. Sir Thomas More took the greatest interest in the education of his children, especially of his daughters. In writing to the youngest, Margaret, he says—"I pray thee, Meg, to let me know what your studies just now are: for I declare to you, that rather than suffer my children to lose ground, I would myself continue your education to the loss of my worldly estate, and the neglect of all other cares and businesses." A tutor, Mr. Gunnel, taught them Latin and Greek, in which they all made great progress, but especially the youngest girl, "Meg." In another letter of her father's to her, he tells how "the Bishop of Exeter, a learned man," had seen one of her letters to him, and had been so delighted with "the good style, the pure Latin," that he had sent her a Portugal piece.

But it was not the father's chief ambition that his daughters should be renowned for learning. On one occasion, when he and their mother were both from home, he writes to Mr. Gunnel—"I rejoice that Bessie has shown as much modesty of deportment in her mother's absence as she could have done in her presence. Tell her that this delights me above all things, for much as I esteem learning, which, when joined with virtue, is worth all the treasures of kings, what doth the fame of

great scholarship apart from well-regulated conduct bring us except distinguished infamy? Among other notable benefits which solid learning bestows, I reckon this among the first, that we acquire it not for the mere sake of praise, but for its own true value and use. I see not why learning in this manner may not equally agree with both sexes, for by it reason is cultivated, and is as a field sown with wholesome precepts which bring forth good fruit."

As the family grew up, they still lived together in unbroken union and love. Erasmus, of whom we have spoken already, paid another visit to England, and was a frequent guest at Sir Thomas More's house. In one of his letters he thus describes the household:—"More has a house at Chelsea. There he converses with his wife, his son, his daughter-in-law, his three daughters and their husbands, with eleven grandchildren. There is not a man living so affectionate as he; he loveth his old wife, as if she were a young maid. I would call his house the academy of Plato, were it not an injustice to compare it with an academy, where disputations concerning numbers and figures were only occasionally interspersed with disquisitions on the moral virtues. I should rather call his house a school of Christianity, for though there is no one in it who does not study the liberal sciences, their special care is piety and virtue. No quarrelling nor intemperate words are heard; idleness is never seen."

Many learned men besides Erasmus visited Sir Thomas More at Chelsea, joining the family circle, and sharing the simple, cheerful life of the household, the centre of which was Sir Thomas More himself. Various questions were often discussed among them, as they walked in the pleasant garden, or sat around the hospitable table, such as the best form of government, the true manner of life, the right kind of education and training for the young; for no worldly success ever turned More from that honest search for Truth,

and earnest striving to find out the highest ideal of what was right and best, with which he had begun life. He at last put together his thoughts on various subjects into the form of a story. He began writing this book in 1515, when he had been sent by the king on some affairs of state to Flanders. At Antwerp he formed a friendship with a citizen named Peter Giles, whose learning, intelligence, and pleasant kindness served, as Sir Thomas More says, "to diminish the fervent desire that I had to see my native country, my wife, and my children, whom then I did much long and covet to see, because that at that time I had been more than four months from them." He begins his book by saying that, on a certain day, as he was leaving a church at Antwerp, he chanced to see Peter Giles talking with a strange-looking man, "well stricken in age, with a black sunburnt face, a long beard, and a cloak cast about his shoulders," whom he judged to be a mariner. This man Peter Giles introduced to him as Raphael Hythloday, a very learned man, a Portuguese, who had been out with Amerigo Vespucci, in his voyages to the newly-found continent of America. Sir Thomas More describes himself as only too glad to make the acquaintance of so learned a traveller, and then the three men go to More's house, and sitting on a green bench in the garden, they begin to talk, as More and his friends often did in the house at home at Chelsea, speaking of governments, the causes of crime and misery among the poor, the evils of war, and mischiefs arising from the want of education and training of the young. And as they talked, Hythloday constantly referred to the better way in which they managed things in Utopia, till at last Sir Thomas More asked him to tell them all about this place of which he spoke so often. It was now dinner-time though, but as soon as they had dined, they came out again into the garden, and sitting down on the same green bench, they listened to his story.

Raphael Hythloday told them that, in the last voyage of Amerigo Vespucci, he and some others were left after shipwreck on a part of the South American coast, which he calls Gulike; from this part he explored the country and discovered an island called Utopia. Here Hythloday lived for five years; and in the description of this island, and the customs and laws of its inhabitants, Sir Thomas More gives his own ideas respecting all those things about which he had so often thought and spoken. The story of Utopia contains those conclusions he had himself arrived at in his earnest striving to find out the highest ideal of what was right and best. At that time, and for many a year afterwards, the story of Utopia was thought to be full of fancies which never could become real; but we shall see that Sir Thomas More had reached so much truth in it, that we are now adopting, or striving to get adopted, many of the laws and customs of the Utopians.

Every child in Utopia, boy or girl, rich or poor, received an equally good education. They were taught to speak and write their own language correctly, and they learnt arithmetic, geometry, logic, music, and natural science, besides being instructed in their own religion. As they grew up, their education was never considered to be finished, but a certain number of hours every day was given to study, and there were daily lectures, which were largely attended by both men and women. Work of all kinds was held in high honour, and every person had some occupation; but no one was allowed to work more than a certain number of hours, so as to leave him time for reading, thought, and recreation.

The government was carried on by a certain number of the wisest and best men, who were elected by ballot. No criminal was put to death; and he was always allowed the hope that by good conduct he might be restored to his place in society. War they detested and abhorred, and

they "counted nothing so much against glory, as glory gotten in war." They were trained to carry arms, but only that they might defend themselves when attacked, or protect others from injustice. There were different opinions in regard to religion in Utopia, and each man was allowed to hold his own, and might do what he could by reason and gentleness to bring others to think the same as he did; but whoever used violent and angry words against those who differed from him was to be banished. There were laws in Utopia against the overcrowding of the cities; and no rich man was allowed to have a great house all to himself while another man with a large family was forced to live in a dwelling much too small. Great care was also taken to preserve the air pure, and nothing likely to pollute it was allowed to be done in the cities. The great principle at the root of the whole state in Utopia was love, instead of self-interest, and from this sprang the arrangements and customs of society.

Sir Thomas More wrote his book in Latin, in which language it could be read by all the learned men and thinkers of the time, for the people generally were scarcely ready to receive it. He felt this in the last words of the book, where he says, "there are many things in Utopia which in our cities I may rather *wish* for, than *hope* after." The year in which Sir Thomas More wrote "Utopia" was also marked by the publication of the Greek Testament of Erasmus; and the next year, 1517, Martin Luther began his work as a reformer, by fastening his protest against indulgences on the church door at Wittenberg. In England William Tyndal was translating the New Testament into English, and in 1525 copies of it, printed abroad, were brought into England. Everywhere the light was breaking and showing more and more clearly the errors and corruptions of the Church. But while all thoughtful and enlightened men saw these with grief or indignation, they

did not agree as to what was their own duty in regard to the Church. There were some who believed that there could only be one Church upon earth, and that the Pope was the divinely appointed head of it, and to separate from it seemed to them like separating themselves from Christ. These hoped that the spread of light within the Church might lead to its reformation and restoration to its original purity. This was the view held by Sir Thomas More. Others felt that it was hopeless to look for reform in a Church which had departed so widely from the truth, and the leaders of which were interested in keeping up the evils of it. They saw that to be steadfast to Christ they must give up the Church. This was the position of Luther.

In 1528 Sir Thomas More was employed in writing against the views of Luther and Tyndal, and in defence of the Church. At the same time the discussion was going on as to whether the king should put away his wife Katherine of Aragon. Wolsey's attempt to delay the proceedings of the Papal Court appointed to try the case caused his fall; and then Sir Thomas More was made Lord Chancellor. But it was only for a short time that he held this office. The Pope refused consent to the king's divorce, and condemned the English Court which had granted it; upon this Henry VIII. resolved to separate the English Church from that of Rome, and to make himself the head of it. In this act he would be supported by all those who were hopeless of obtaining reform in the Church of Rome, and who held that Christ was more than the Church; but on the other hand, those who believed that there could be but one real outward Church, at the head of which was the Pope, could not sanction the act of the king in establishing a separate English Church and in making himself the head of it. A statute was passed called the "Act of Supremacy," by which all persons who refused to

acknowledge Henry VIII. as head of the English Church were to be put to death.

As soon as the king's intentions were made known, Sir Thomas More resigned the Chancellorship; and he saw plainly that the day was coming when his steadfastness to what he believed to be the truth would be put to a severer test. Those must have been days of terrible anxiety to his family who honoured and loved him so well, but they were passed by Sir Thomas More in study and prayer. At last he was summoned to Lambeth to take the oath that he believed the king to be the true head of the English Church. He took farewell of his wife and family, and left the pleasant home at Chelsea, never to return to it again. He refused the oath, and was committed as prisoner to the Tower. There he was allowed to see his wife and daughters once more; but nothing could persuade him to be unfaithful to what he believed to be the truth, and on the 6th of July he was beheaded on Tower Hill.

CHAPTER VI.

LATIMER.

We have seen how the first influence of the new learning in England was to stir up men like Sir Thomas More to search for truth and right in all things ; but while it led him and others to desire reform of what was false and wrong, they still held firmly to the deeply-rooted, long-established idea that the oneness of Christ's Church was outward—that is, that it was everywhere to have the same doctrines, forms of worship, government, and to be under the same head, the Pope. Now we must turn to another earnest man of the time, who, like Sir Thomas More, loved truth better than life, but who gave up the idea of the outward oneness of the Church, and worked hard to make men one in their faithful following of Christ. This was Hugh Latimer. Sir Thomas More was a man of great thought and study, who lived among scholars, and wrote for scholars. Latimer was a man of the people, loving them, and speaking to them in their own plain language and way. We want both kinds of men in the world, and it is not well to contrast them with one another, in order to say that one is less noble and serviceable than the other, or less worthy of our honour and love. We want the thinker and the scholar to find out truth ; and we want the earnest warm-hearted worker to carry the truth down into the minds and hearts of the people, so that it may be wrought out in living deeds.

Hugh Latimer was born about the year 1491, at Thurcaston, in Leicestershire. His father had a small farm, in which

he employed about a dozen labourers, and where he kept a hundred sheep and about thirty cows. He was a brave, honest, God-fearing man, working hard upon his farm, and saving money; so that he was able to give each of his six daughters a marriage portion, and to give good education to his son, while he had always something for the poor, or for the help of a needy neighbour. He kept a horse and arms ready for the king's service, and would buckle on his armour and ride forth to battle, whenever the English yeomen were wanted in the field. His wife milked the cows, looked after the house, and trained their six girls in godliness and the fear of the Lord.

Hugh was their only boy who lived to grow up; and seeing that he was quick and intelligent, they sent him early to school, where he learnt readily all he was taught. At home his father taught him to shoot well with the bow, the English yeomen being famous archers above all other people at that time. When he was fourteen, he had done so well at school that he was sent to Cambridge; and while he was still a student there, and only eighteen, he was elected a fellow of his college. At twenty-four he was made professor of Greek, and he threw himself eagerly into the Greek learning; but he set himself strongly against the study of the Greek Testament, and tried to turn the students from what he called "this new-fangled study of the Scriptures."

He had now been ordained a priest, and he held firmly to the Romish Church, in which he had been brought up. On the day when he took his degree of Bachelor of Divinity, he had to make a Latin oration, and he took this occasion to attack with all his eloquence the teaching of the Reformer Melancthon. Among those who heard Latimer speak that day was Thomas Bilney, afterwards one of the martyrs of the Reformation; he followed Latimer to his rooms, and there explained to him more fully the teaching of the New Testament, and showed how the Church had departed from

it. Latimer was convinced, and honestly confessed he had been in error. He now began to teach the new Truth he had laid hold of at Cambridge, until, at the end of about three years, Cardinal Wolsey called him up to London to answer to the charge of teaching heresy in the University.

This was near the time of Wolsey's fall; and while the delay of the Pope in granting leave to the king to put away his wife Katherine was causing Henry VIII. to lean towards the Reformers, Latimer signed certain articles proposed to him, and immediately after he was called to preach before the king at Windsor, and when the sermon was over the king came and talked with him in the gallery.

Latimer was one of those who, in seeking reform, saw the helplessness of looking for it to the Romish Church. When, therefore, Henry VIII. separated the English Church from the rule of the Pope, Latimer readily took the oath of the king's supremacy. He was appointed chaplain to the king, and preached both at Court and in London. One point in which Latimer felt very strongly was the right of the people to read the Bible for themselves; and he wrote a letter to the king "for restoring again the free liberty of reading the Holy Scriptures." In 1531 the king made Latimer rector of West Kington, Wilts; and Latimer, "weary of the Court," gladly went down to his parish to work among the people. But before long, Latimer's bold teaching of the plain truths of Scripture brought on him a charge of heresy to the Church. Archbishop Wareham excommunicated him, and he was imprisoned; but by the king's request, he was set free and allowed to return home. The next year the Archbishop died, and Cranmer, Latimer's friend, was made Primate. We now find Latimer often in London, preaching at Court and in the City; and very soon he was made Bishop of Worcester.

Up to this point Latimer had stood high in favour with the king. Henry VIII. no doubt enjoyed the shrewd

sense, the bluff honesty, and the pleasant humour of Latimer's sermons; and they were both from different motives and in different ways working for the reform of the Church. But when in the latter part of Henry's reign, an attempt was made by the "Statute of Six Articles" to bring back into the English Church many of the doctrines and practices of the Church of Rome, Latimer at once resigned his bishopric; and he showed his faithfulness to truth and duty by taking a position in which he stood opposed to the king and those around him in the Church. Like all true-hearted men, Latimer felt deeply the pain of separating himself from others: he had no desire to be singular; and when it was complained of him that "he was contrary to them all," he says, "Marry, sirs, this was a sore thunderbolt; I thought it an irksome thing to be alone, and to have no fellow."

He was now commanded to be silent from preaching; and during the rest of Henry's reign we hear little of him. At the death of the king he was a prisoner in the Tower. When Edward VI. came to the throne, Latimer's friend Cranmer had the rule of the Church in his hands. Latimer was at once set free, and Cranmer took him to live with him at Lambeth. He now began preaching constantly: sometimes before the young king in the palace-garden at Westminster—"where he might be heard by four-times as many people as in the king's chapel"—sometimes at Paul's Cross, where in fine weather the people of London gathered in crowds to hear him; and sometimes, when it was wet or cold, in a covered part of the cathedral called the shrouds. We will go and listen to one of these sermons, which he called "the Ploughers."

"It is winter-tide, Friday, 18th of January, 1549, in the afternoon, and the sermon this day is to be under shelter and cover of the shrouds. There the congregation wait the coming of the great preacher, standing, as was then the

custom in Divine worship. As they wait, their thoughts go back to the beginning of the present series of sermons. At the outset they had been told that the preacher proposed to declare to them two things: God's seed, and God's sowers. He had shown them already that the seed to be sown in God's plough-land was God's word to be sown in the faithful congregation. What would he now say of the sowers? The preacher—coming from Lambeth Palace—now enters the pulpit. All eyes gaze upon him. What a famous man he is! What a name he is in England! What had that man seen! What had he said! What had he done! What a fight he had waged for eight-and-twenty years against all forms of opposition, craft, and malice! Through how many examinations and trials he had passed! How often had he been in prison, daily expecting death by violence or torture! Preaching constantly when permitted, and standing there ready to preach, though convinced 'that the preaching of the Gospel would cost him his life, to the which thing he did most cheerfully arm and prepare himself.' Yet there he stands, 'sore bruised,' indeed, older far in appearance than in age; yet there he stands, uncrippled and alive. What a merry wit he has! What a kind and loving heart! What skill he has in attack and in defence! How he relishes the telling of a good story! Dauntless, incorruptible, despising wealth except for charity, an enthusiastic social Reformer, as well as a godly teacher, a lover of the people, Hugh Latimer stands there, and expounds unto them who be the ploughers."*

He begins his sermon with the text, "Whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning," and then he goes on, "And now I shall tell you who be the ploughers, for God's word is a seed to be sown in God's

* Introduction to Latimer's "Sermon on the Ploughers" (Arber's English Reprints).

field, that is the faithful congregation, and the preacher is the sower. And it is in the Gospel 'A sower went out to sow his seed;' he that soweth, the husbandman, the ploughman, went forth to sow his seed, so that a preacher is resembled to a ploughman; for preaching the Gospel is one of God's plough works, and the preacher is one of God's ploughmen. And well may the preacher and the ploughman be likened together. First, for their labour is at all seasons of the year. For there is no time of the year in which the ploughman hath not some special work to do, as in my country in Leicestershire the ploughman hath a time to set forth and to assay his plough, and other times for other necessary works to be done. And then they may also be likened together for the diversity of works and variety of offices that they have to do. For as the ploughman first setteth forth his plough, and then tilleth his land, and breaketh it in furrows, and sometimes ridgeth it up again, and at another time harroweth it, and hedgeth it, and diggeth it, and weedeth it, so the preacher hath many diverse offices to do. He hath first a busy work to bring his parishioners to a right faith, a faith that embraceth Christ and trusteth to His merits, a lively faith, a justifying faith. Now casting them down with the law and threatenings for sin, now ridging them up again with the Gospel and God's promises of favour. Now weeding them, by telling them their faults, and making them forsake sin. Now breaking the stones by making them to have soft hearts, apt for doctrine to enter in. Now teaching to know God rightly, and to know their duty to God and to their neighbours. Now exhorting them when they know their duty that they do it and be diligent in it. Thus they have a continual work to do. They have great labours, and therefore they ought to have good livings, for the preaching of the word of God unto the people is called meat, Scripture calleth it meat; not strawberries, that come

but once a year and tarry not long but are soon gone, but it is meat. It is no dainties. The people must have meat that must be familiar and continual and daily given unto them to feed upon. Many make a strawberry of it, ministering it but once a year, but such do not the office of good ministers."

Then Latimer goes on to speak of those prelates and clergymen who never taught their people, but passed their time in idleness and self-indulgence; and presently he asks, "Who is the most diligent bishop and prelate in all England that passeth all the rest in doing his office?" Every one listens eagerly to hear which of the clergy Latimer will name, and then he says, "I will tell you; it is the devil. He is never out of his diocese, he is never from his cure, ye shall never find him unoccupied, he is ever in his parish, he keepeth residence at all times: ye shall never find him out of the way, call for him when ye will; he is ever at his plough: ye shall never find him idle, I warrant you. Oh, that our prelates would be as diligent to sow the corn of good doctrine as Satan is to sow cockle and darnel." Latimer concludes his sermon with showing how the good King Hezekiah had put down idolatry in his kingdom; and then he says, "Howbeit, there is now very good hope that the king's majesty, being helped by good counsellors, and trained and brought up in learning and knowledge of God's word, will shortly provide a remedy and set an order herein, which thing that it may so be, let us pray for him. Pray for him, good people, pray for him; ye have great cause and need to pray for him."

The hopes which Latimer placed on Edward VI. were not to be fulfilled by him. In Lent, 1550, Latimer preached his last sermon before the young king. It was against covetousness, and lasted three hours. Shortly afterwards Latimer left London, and went down into Lincolnshire. He was there at the time of the death of Edward VI., and Mary was

scarcely established on the throne when he was called up to London. He must have known quite well what he was wanted for; but he went up with a brave heart. Mary had resolved to unite the English Church again to Rome; and Latimer had been most earnest in striving to get the English Church purified from the evils and errors which had crept into the Church of Rome. Latimer was brought before the Council; but he steadily refused to sign the articles requiring him to profess faith in the Romish doctrines. Then the old man, now more than sixty years of age, was sent with Cranmer the Archbishop, and Ridley, Bishop of London, to the common gaol at Oxford. Here he remained for sixteen months, but at last was condemned to be burnt at the stake. On an autumn day, October 16, 1555, Latimer and Ridley were brought out of the prison and led to a spot near Baliol College. Here they were fastened to the stake, and the fagots heaped around them. Then some one brought a blazing fagot to set alight to the pile, and he threw this down just at Ridley's feet. Latimer saw this, and turning towards Ridley, he said, "Be of good comfort, Master Ridley, and play the man; we shall this day light such a candle, by God's grace, in England, as I trust shall never be put out." He then cried out, "O Father of Heaven, receive my soul;" and bathing his hands a little, as it were in the fire, he soon died, as it appeared with very little pain, reminding one of what Cædmon had sung of the brave youths in the fiery furnace at Babylon—

> "Therein they unhurt
> Walked as in shining of the summer sun,
> When day breaks and the winds disperse the dew."

Men who held Truth with such hearty faith and such loyal, tender love could not be moved by terror of such a death; but not only the great minds, the leaders in the struggle to find out the true and right, held the treasure as worth more

than life itself, but unlearned men, who had received the Truth from the teaching of men like Latimer, clung to it with an instinctive trust and love as strong as that founded on conviction; and during the five years of Mary's reign, more than three hundred persons suffered death for holding the doctrines of the Reformers. This shows us how widely indifference and self-interest had given place to earnestness and deep concern for the things of God and for a pure and true life. We must notice this, because we shall see, when we come to the time of Queen Elizabeth, how much it has to do with the story of our English Literature. Before passing on to that time, we must also notice the work of two poets who wrote towards the end of the reign of Henry VIII. These are Sir Thomas Wyatt and the Earl of Surrey. We have seen in Italy the rise of a bright, imaginative literature, careful and artistic in its outward form, written for the delight of Lorenzo de Medici and his Court. Both Sir Thomas Wyatt and Surrey were students of the Italian literature; and Wyatt is considered to be the first English writer of sonnets. This was a form of poem specially used in Italian literature ever since the time of Petrarch. The sonnet contains fourteen lines, of which the rhymes generally fall as follows :—

. . . . . say
. . . . . best
. . . . . rest
. . . . . way
. . . . . may
. . . . . lest
. . . . . nest
. . . . . day
. . . . . cast
. . . . . cries
. . . . . past
. . . . . rise
. . . . . last
. . . . . skies.

Thus it will be seen that in this, the perfect form of the sonnet, there are only four rhymes, though the sequence of these does not always correspond with that of the above model. The first eight lines are supposed to introduce the subject of the sonnet, which is described in the concluding six, in which much variety of arrangement is permitted. In the last line the subject should reach its climax.

Sonnets in Surrey's time were generally grouped around one individual. The poet would choose some one whom he knew, and make this person the hero or heroine of a number of sonnets. Thus the Earl of Surrey chose a young orphan girl named Elizabeth Fitzgerald for the heroine of his sonnets. She was of Italian race, her ancestors having come from Tuscany—from Florence—the very home of the sonnet. Her father was Gerald Fitzgerald, Earl of Kildare; and from her family name, Surrey calls her Geraldine in the poems. When she was a little child her father was imprisoned in the Tower for treason, where he afterwards died; and her mother, who was cousin to Henry VIII., being dead, she was brought to Court, and was taken care of by the Princess Mary. She was a beautiful little child, and became, no doubt, the pet and favourite of the Court. When Surrey began to make her the heroine of his sonnets she was only about eight or nine years old.

The Earl of Surrey, besides writing sonnets, was the first important writer in England of the kind of poetry called blank verse. This also he found in Italian literature. Blank verse has five feet in a line, each consisting of two syllables, and the accent generally falls on the second. The chief difference between it and the metre used by Chaucer is that the last words do not rhyme. Thus Chaucer writes—

> "Bĕ-fēll | thăt ĭn | thăt sēa- | sŏn ōn | ă dāy,
> Ĭn Sōuth- | wărk āt | thĕ Tā- | bărd ās | Ĭ lāy,
> Rēad-ў | tŏ wēnd | ĕn ōn | mў pĭl- | grĭm-āge
> Tŏ Cān- | tĕr-bŭry | wĭth fūll | dĕ-voūt | cŏ-rāge."

The following, from a translation by Surrey, of the second and fourth books of Virgil's "Æneid," are some of the first lines of blank verse in English literature—

"Thĕy whīst | ĕd āll | wĭth fīx- | ĕd fāce | ĭn-tēnt,
Whĕn Prīnce | Æ-nē- | ăs frōm | thĕ rōy | ăl sēat
Thŭs gān | tŏ spēak, | Ŏ Quēen | ĭt īs | thў wīll
Ĭ shōuld | rĕ-nēw | ă wōe | căn-nōt | bĕ tōld."

We have seen how that love of truth and deep, living earnestness, which was to be the soul of the Elizabethan literature, had already sprung into life; and now we find men like Sir Thomas Wyatt and the Earl of Surrey bringing into England some of those artistic forms of the Italian literature which were to prepare a fair and graceful body, as it were, for the nolbe and heroic soul.

CHAPTER VII.

ELIZABETHAN LITERATURE—POETRY

(1588—1599).

We now pass on in the story of our English Literature to a period so full of works of every kind, that it will be impossible to do more than notice the chief; but while we give attention to these, we must keep in mind that the fulness of life is everywhere bursting forth like the buds and blossoms in a fruitful spring-time. The reign of Queen Elizabeth is like a garden in a very favourable season; while some flowers reach a wonderful degree of growth and beauty, and attract the eyes of all, there are an unusual number also of smaller blossoms, sweet and dainty, which pass unnoticed for the very reason of their profusion.

We may remember how through the dreary time which followed after Chaucer, Langland, and Gower, many forces were at work preparing for this fruitful season in our literature. Before we begin the story of the chief writers and greatest works of the Elizabethan time, we must try to understand a little more of those things which were at work among the people, and which helped to form the soul, as it were, of the literature, and which gave to it so much energy and richness of life. These were—

1. *A more wide-spread independence of thought.*—We have seen how scholars and students were stirred by the new learning to search for truth in things, and to question whether all that had been taught them was true and right; and the freer spirit of Greek literature, its unrestrained thought and

bold trust in nature, had given courage to its students. Now this spirit had become general; for the breaking up of the idea that the Church alone had authority to decree what was to be believed, and the giving of the Bible to the laity, had stirred the minds of the people and made them think, and this earnest thinking for themselves quickened the intellect, and wakened originality.

2. *Religious earnestness.*—There were many reasons why a strong interest in religion, and deep feeling about it, should be roused at this time. It was a time of conflict, when scarcely any one could be indifferent to those religious questions on which men's minds were divided. There was the question of the old Church; that Church to which many still clung with ardent affection as the Church of their ancestors, while many others looked upon it as the enemy of truth and holiness. Among the Protestants, too, there was conflict, as we shall see, for as soon as measures were taken, on Elizabeth's coming to the throne, to separate the English Church from that of Rome again, questions arose as to what were now to be the articles of faith, the order of government, and the forms of worship in the reformed English Church, for the idea was still almost universal that there was to be but one outward Church. The persecutions too of the last five years, when so many had seen the terrible sight of their best loved friends burning at the stake, deeply stirred the hearts of the English people, and made them feel that religion was something worth caring for and dying for.

3. *The spread of a purer, simpler faith.*—Men like Latimer had done much to give the people a truer idea of their relation to God, for they taught them what Christ has revealed to us of God, that He is our Father, and near to every one of us; and from this sprang that faith and trust in God Himself which gave courage and joy in the midst of dangers, and that love of God which is the root of

duty, so that men were ready to risk all for His honour instead of seeking to buy pardons for breaking his commands.

4. *Patriotism.*—A strong love of England and the queen runs through all the Elizabethan literature. It was a time of great danger to our country, and the perils at home and abroad called forth all the steadfast heroic love of her true sons for England. With this was so joined an enthusiastic devotion to the queen, that we cannot separate the two feelings. Elizabeth was in every way the very representation of the England of her day, and much that sounds like mere compliment to a woman must be taken as the expression of enthusiasm for all that the queen personified. In her were the independence of thought, the earnestness, the courage, the new love of learning, the bright imagination and poetry, the artistic skill in the use of words of the England of her day; the dangers of the country were her dangers, and her devotion to England was as strong as England's devotion to her.

5. *Vigour of imagination.*—There were many things at this time which gave great exercise to the imagination, and set before it many new pictures of life. The old English stories of Chaucer and the old ballads were reprinted and widely read, and many new stories of life in Italy and ancient Greece came into England with the Italian and Greek literature, besides which there were the wonderful tales of South America and other foreign lands which the bold navigators and discoverers of the time were constantly bringing home.

While all these influences were at work in shaping the soul of the Elizabethan literature, the Italian literature gave it outward form. We have seen how Wyatt and Surrey took the form of their poems from the Italian; and in Elizabeth's reign Italian literature was considered to be the model for all other. Its influence is seen in the clever use of words, in the search for similes (comparing one thing to another)

and antitheses (contrasting one thing with another), in the introduction of new measures for poetry, of blank verse, and of new forms of literature—sonnets, pastorals, novels.

One feature of the Elizabethan literature is the great variety of its forms—poetry, stories, romances, plays, travels, histories, and religious works of many different kinds. We shall perhaps best follow the story of our English Literature by giving account of the chief works in each of these forms, remembering at the same time the rich abundance of smaller works, which are passed over for the sake of dwelling on the greater.

The reign of Queen Elizabeth begins like a genial spring-day after a cruel and gloomy winter. "It is the hour of feeling," and from many a full heart there rise little bursts of song in the form of short poems; at first written and handed about among friends, but which by degrees were collected and put together in volumes. Many such collections of poems appeared during Elizabeth's reign; among the most popular were "Tottel's Miscellany," "A Paradise of Dainty Devices," "A Gorgeous Gallery of Gallant Inventions." But about six years before Elizabeth came to the throne, the greatest poet of her reign was born, and in him and in his work we find the most complete representation of the very soul of the Elizabethan literature. This was Edmund Spenser. He was born in London, near the Tower, about the year 1552. It is probable that his parents held strongly to the new teaching of the Reformers, and may themselves have been in danger during the harsh persecution of Queen Mary's time; at all events they would have been deeply stirred by it, and their teachings, joined to Spenser's own earliest recollections, would help to form that antagonism which he held through life to the Church of Rome. Spenser was about six or seven years old when Queen Elizabeth came to the throne; and it was perhaps about that time that he was sent to the Mer-

chant Taylors' School. During the time that Spenser was a boy at Merchant Taylors' School, there was a cruel persecution being carried on of the Protestants in the Netherlands, by Philip II. of Spain; and many of the Netherlanders left their country and took refuge in England. Amongst these refugees was a man named John van der Noodt, who seems to have been received with welcome and sympathy by the Spensers. The outward life of these Flemish Protestants was indeed "destitute, afflicted, tormented;" but nevertheless we find John van der Noodt writing a book, in which he shows the miseries and calamities that follow on a life spent only for this world, and "the great joys and pleasures which the faithful do enjoy." Spenser was now a lad of fifteen or sixteen, and he early shows his sympathy with that view of life which was set forth in Van der Noodt's book, by contributing to it translations of the visions of Petrarch and of Bellay, a French poet.

In 1569 Spenser went to Cambridge. He entered the University as a sizar, which means that in return for services done in the college he paid lower fees, and it shows that his parents were not rich. But little is known of his life there, except that in 1573 he took his degree of B.A., and in 1576 that of M.A. So far we see that he was a good student, but most likely his mind was being moulded also by other things than his college studies. Spenser was throughout the poet of his time, he felt most strongly all its dangers, its hopes and aims; and there were events taking place in England during the years from 1569 to 1576 which were likely to make a deep impression upon him, and which we shall see strongly influenced his work.

The year before Spenser went to Cambridge, Mary Queen of Scots, whom we shall hear of in the "Faerie Queene," came to England as the murderess of her husband, flying from her own subjects. In the same year that he entered the University occurred the rising of the Earls of Northumber-

land and Westmoreland in the cause of Mary, and for the restoration of Romanism in England. In the next year, 1571, a bull from the Pope was sent into England, deposing Elizabeth, England's queen, and declaring her subjects free from all allegiance to her. The conspiracy of the Duke of Norfolk to marry Mary, place her on the throne, and re-establish Romanism, took place in 1572. In the same year, news would come to Cambridge of the massacre of the Protestants in Paris on St. Bartholomew's Day; and also of the rising in the Netherlands of the Protestants against the cruelties of the Duke of Alva; and with this Spenser, from his acquaintance with Van der Noodt, would strongly sympathise. All these things would be talked about eagerly at Cambridge, and would help to deepen in Spenser the strong conviction of his life, that the Romish Church had departed from the teaching of Christ and His Apostles. There were many persons now in England who felt as Spenser did, and who wished to give up in the English Church every part of the older forms of service and Church government, and amongst these was Thomas Cartwright, who at the very time that Spenser was at Cambridge was Professor of Divinity there. He lectured vehemently against the retaining of any relics of the old ritual, and joined with others in attempting to move Parliament to a further reform of the Book of Common Prayer. This drew upon him the displeasure of the more moderate party, and he was deprived in 1572 of his Professorship and Fellowship. Spenser no doubt took a warm interest in all that passed, for his sympathies would be strongly stirred on Cartwright's side. Cartwright objected to the order of bishops in the Church; and in Spenser's first published poems, written after he left Cambridge, he speaks of those pastors who are seated high above their brethren, and claim lordship over them.

Whilst at college Spenser had a friend who was of some use to him in his after-life. This was Gabriel Harvey.

He was shrewd and clever, ready to do the best for himself, and kindly in helping others to do the same. In 1576 Spenser left college and went to the north, probably to become tutor in some family or school. Gabriel Harvey remained at Cambridge as lecturer on rhetoric. In 1578 Queen Elizabeth paid a visit to Audley End, a house near Saffron Walden. Gabriel Harvey was a Saffron Walden man, and made himself busy in the preparations for receiving the queen. He wrote a series of Latin poems on the queen's visit, and this led to his being presented to her. He also formed an acquaintance with Philip Sidney, the nephew of the Earl of Leicester, who, with his uncle, was in attendance on the queen. Shortly after this we find him in London, in the Earl of Leicester's service. One of his first thoughts seems now to have been how he could help his poet friend. He wrote to Spenser, advising him to leave the north and come up to London; and in 1578 Spenser returned to town, and, probably through the good offices of Harvey, found employment also in Leicester's service.

The Earl of Leicester had a house at this time in the Strand, and among the crowd of persons around the queen's favourite courtier, no one was so much loved and praised as his nephew Philip Sidney. A strong friendship could hardly fail to spring up between Spenser and Sidney, for there was just that unity of nature and feeling between them, in which love takes most deep and steadfast root. Both had that sense of the ideal, or that perception of the perfect goodness and beauty, which made them seek a degree of excellence in things above what many persons might think necessary or possible. This desire after what is best and most beautiful gave them delight in literature, and many happy hours they no doubt spent in talking over what they had read and thought about before they knew one another; and they would also like to tell one

another of what they had been doing in the world before they met. We know what Spenser's life had been, so far as it can now be traced, but we must listen to what Sidney would have to tell Spenser.

We may fancy that the two friends are at Sidney's home, Penshurst, in Kent, wandering as they often did in its pleasant grounds, or resting under the shade of its fine old trees. There rises the house, with its grey walls and turrets and high-pointed red roofs, surrounded by gardens full of flowers and fruit, while beyond stretch the long green glades of the park and the shrubby copses, and the meadows sloping to the river. Here, on the 29th of November, 1554, Philip Sidney was born. His father, Sir Henry Sidney, was friend of the young King Edward VI., and his mother was the sister of Guildford Dudley, husband of Lady Jane Grey, and of Robert Dudley, the Earl of Leicester in Queen Elizabeth's reign. The next year, Philip had a little sister, Mary, who was through life his steadfast, loving companion and confidant, interested in all he did, and sympathising in all his joys and troubles. In 1558 Queen Elizabeth came to the throne; and not long after, Sir Henry Sidney was made Lord President of Wales, so that when Philip was about five years old and Mary about four, they went to live with their parents at Ludlow Castle, in Shropshire. There was at that time in Shrewsbury a celebrated school, one of the largest and best in England, kept by a Mr. Thomas Ashton, who had been at Oxford at the same time as Sir Henry Sidney; here Philip was sent when he was ten years old; and the same day there came also to the Shrewsbury school another little boy named Fulke Greville. Whether the two boys were first drawn together by their both having that desolate feeling which comes over us when we find ourselves among strangers, and away from all those who love us, cannot be said; but

they at once became friends, and continued so through life. Philip stayed at school until he was fourteen, and worked well. During this time his father had been made Lord Deputy of Ireland, and was engaged there in trying to bring the people into order; he saw little therefore of his son, but he wrote him a letter (which is still preserved), full of wise, loving counsels about his prayers, his studies, his exercises, his manners. He bids him be merry, or he will not be like his father, to be modest, and, "above all things, tell no untruth, no not in trifles; the custom of it is naughty, and there cannot be a greater reproach to a gentleman than to be accounted a liar." To this his mother adds a postscript, which she will not make a long one, because she does not wish to turn his thoughts from his father's letter, so she says, "I will only bless you with my desire to God to plant you in His grace, warn you to have always before your eyes the excellent counsels of my dear lord, your father; and see that you show yourself as a loving, obedient scholar to your good master. Farewell, my little Philip, and once again, the Lord bless you! Your loving mother, Mary Sidney."

In 1568 Philip Sidney and his life-long friend Fulke Greville left school, and together entered Oxford University. They were then both fourteen. After three years a plague broke out in Oxford, and it is probable that this caused Sidney to leave Oxford without taking his degree. He had worked well, and perhaps his father did not care for him to return only for the degree itself. His parents had just come back from Ireland, and he most likely spent some months with them at Ludlow Castle, or at Penshurst. There was much talk at that time of the marriage of Queen Elizabeth to the Duke of Alençon, brother of Charles IX., the French king; and in 1572 the Earl of Lincoln was going over to Paris to see how far this match seemed desirable. This seemed a good opportunity for Philip

Sidney to go abroad, see other countries and nations, and perfect himself in foreign languages, so his uncle Leicester obtained permission from the queen for Sidney to join the party of the queen's special ambassador.

Sidney did not return with Lincoln, but stayed in Paris for three months with Walsingham, the English Ambassador. Here he was on Saturday, the 23rd of August, the Eve of St. Bartholomew, and no doubt heard the bell sound at half-past twelve, and then the screams and cries of the Protestants, as the armed bands broke open their houses, and the massacre began.

Sidney was safe in Walsingham's house, but it would have been at the risk of his life if he had ventured into the streets. Very soon after this dreadful night Sidney left Paris, and passing through the north of France and south of Germany, he came to Frankfort. His visit here is remarkable, because it gave him one of his truest friends. This was Hubert Languet, a man of great thought and learning, a friend of Melancthon, and one of the leading Protestants of that time. He was now fifty-four, and Philip only eighteen, but a love like that of father and son grew up between them; and from that day to Languet's death he never ceased to watch over Philip Sidney, caring for all his best interests, and tenderly advising him whenever he thought he was in danger of not living up to his highest duties. Many years afterward Philip Sidney said of his old friend, who was then no more—

> "The song I sang old Languet had me taught,
> Languet the shepherd best swift Ister knew,
> For clerkly reed, and hating what is naught,
> For faithful heart, clean hands, and mouth as true.
> With his sweet skill my skilless youth he drew
> To have a feeling taste of Him, that sits
> Beyond the Heaven, far more beyond our wits."

Sidney spent some time still abroad, visiting with

Languet Vienna, and alone Hungary and Italy. In June, 1575, Sidney came home; his father was still in Ireland, and Sidney was now much with his uncle, the Earl of Leicester, and entered into all the gay doings of the Court. The queen had made up her mind to make a royal progress this summer through Warwickshire, and to pay a visit to Kenilworth, Leicester's house. Philip Sidney, with his mother and sister Mary, accompanied the queen. They were present at the grand festivities at Kenilworth, which lasted eighteen days, every day bringing with it some new show or amusement. An account of these can be read in Walter Scott's novel of "Kenilworth." The royal party then went on to Lichfield, and from thence to Chartley Castle, the seat of the Earl of Essex. Here Philip Sidney first saw Penelope Devereux, eldest daughter of the Earl of Essex, whom he afterwards made the heroine of his sonnets, under the name of Stella, but she was now a little girl only twelve years old. More than two months were spent by the queen on this progress, and in September the royal party returned to London. Philip was now rising in favour with Queen Elizabeth, and was already beginning to win also trust and love from all who knew him. The next year, though only twenty-two, he was chosen as the special ambassador to the new Emperor of Germany. One chief object of this mission was to seek help and freedom for the Reformed States; and to manage this required great skill and clearness of perception.

When Sidney came home in June, 1577, he found his sister Mary married to the Earl of Pembroke; and he paid a visit to her at her new home at Wilton. We next find him courageously defending his father at Court from attacks made on his Irish government, and engaged also in writing a little piece called the "Lady of May," to be performed on a visit paid by the queen to Leicester at Wanstead House. A little later in the same year Philip Sidney came

with the queen to Audley End, and then occurred the introduction to Gabriel Harvey; and from that the friendship between Spenser and Sidney.

It was in 1578 that Spenser came up to London to the Earl of Leicester's; shortly after he must have spent some time at Penshurst with Philip Sidney, for in 1579 was published "The Shepheard's Calender," Spenser's first published poem. It was dedicated "To the noble and virtuous gentleman, most worthy of all titles both of learning and chivalry, Maister Philip Sidney." The scene of the poem is placed in Kent, and the descriptions agree minutely with the country around Penshurst. Spenser probably had already planned the idea of the poem before he came up to London, and part of it may have been written. It is a pastoral, a form of story used in Italian and French literature, but never before this in English literature. Some parts of the poem are translations of poems by Clement Marot, a French Reformer, but the idea and the working out of the poem are Spenser's own. The pastoral was necessarily a story of shepherd life, and in "The Shepheard's Calender," Spenser introduces himself, Gabriel Harvey, and others of his friends as shepherds, keeping their flocks among the downs and winding dales of Kent. He calls himself Colin Clout, after the name used by Skelton in his poems on public events looked at from the poor man's side. Harvey is Hobbinol; the queen, the fair Elisa, a shepherd's daughter, "the queen of shepherds all;" and Chaucer is Tityrus, chief of shepherds, who has taught Colin Clout to sing. The poem consists of twelve eclogues, one for each month of the year, each giving the songs and talk of the shepherds as they meet with their flocks upon the downs. Like all that Spenser wrote, there is strong earnest interest shown in all the feeling and work of the time; and the shepherds, under various pastoral figures, express Spenser's deep concern for the best interests

of the country. The conflict going on in regard to the form of government in the Church is discussed from his point of view; there is the shepherd Morrell, who sits upon a high hill, leaving his flock to stray among the bushes below, and who stands for Aylmer, Bishop of London. Grindal, Archbishop of Canterbury, who, in opposition to the queen, was at that time defending the free preaching of the clergy, and their expounding of the Bible to their people, appears in the poem as Algrind, the good shepherd, who had learned to care more for the flock, than "such hills to climb." The desire of some persons to retain Romish ceremonies in the Church is touched on in the little fable told by one of the shepherds of the "Foxe and the Kiddie." The enthusiasm for Queen Elizabeth, as the personification of all that was most highly esteemed at that time, has its place in Spenser's first poem, being introduced as a song written by Colin in praise of the shepherds' queen—

"See where she sits upon the grassy green
(O seemly sight!)
Y-clad in scarlet like a maiden queen,
And ermines white.
Upon her head a cremosin coronet
With damask roses and daffodillies set,
Bay leaves between,
And primroses green,
Embellish the sweet violet.

"Tell me, have ye seen her angelic face,
Like Phœbe fair?
Her heavenly haveour, her princely grace
Can you well compare?
The red rose medled with the white-y-frere,
In either cheek depicted lively cheer,
Her modest eye
Her majesty,
Where have you seen the like but there?"

These are only two verses of the song, but perhaps Queen Elizabeth did not often get prettier praise than this.

Besides questions of public interest, Spenser (for he was no mere politician) reveals deeper thoughts about what poetry does for the world, and the true use and aims of life.

As soon as Spenser had finished "The Shepheard's Calender," or perhaps before, he began to plan the great work of his future lifetime, the "Faerie Queene." He had sent either the plan of the poem or some of the cantos to Harvey, but he gave him no encouragement to go on with it. The next year, 1580, Lord Grey of Wilton, a friend of the Sidneys, was appointed Lord Deputy of Ireland, in place of Sir Henry Sidney; through the influence, no doubt, of Philip Sidney, he took Spenser with him to Ireland as his private secretary. From this time to nearly the end of his life Ireland became Spenser's home. It may have been somewhat of an exile to be shut off from all the fulness of life in England during these years; but Spenser had the highest esteem for Lord Grey, and he also had for friend there Sir Walter Raleigh; and more than this, it was here that he met with his wife Elizabeth. Then he had his great work in hand, the "Faerie Queene," always a source of joyful and absorbing interest, and perhaps he could scarcely have accomplished as much as he did of the grand plan of the poem had he lived in London, amid the distractions of society. He also took intelligent interest in the affairs of Ireland, striving to see clearly the true state of things, and what were the best remedies for the unhappy country. Here we leave Spenser a while to follow the life of his friend Philip Sidney.

The same year that Spenser went to Ireland Philip Sidney fell out of favour with the queen. Plans were still going on for the queen's marriage with the Duke of Alençon; and Philip, with many other Englishmen, thought that such a union would bring mischief upon England, and unhappiness upon the queen herself.

His loyalty to the queen was no mere courtier's sentiment ending in flattery; he wrote a respectful letter to Queen Elizabeth, urging all the reasons against this marriage: he had been much in the French Court while he was in Paris, and he could speak of Alençon's character, and of his conduct during the massacre of the Protestants on St. Bartholomew's Day. The queen was very angry at Philip Sidney's faithful counsel; a quarrel had also arisen between Sidney and the Earl of Oxford a short time before, in which the queen took the side of Oxford, who promoted the French marriage; Leicester, too, was out of favour with the queen at that time in consequence of his marriage; so Philip Sidney withdrew from Court for a while, and went to stay at Wilton with his sister Mary. He stayed there for seven or eight months—all through the spring and summer of 1580; and perhaps these quiet months may have been some of the happiest of his life. He was in the midst of some of the sweetest English scenery, in a house made beautiful by the best art of that time, and which must have recalled to mind the old home at Penshurst;* and he had the companionship of his sister Mary, with whom he had always lived in constant love and sympathy. She was a woman of high education and of a fine mind, which she used for the help of others, rather than for her own vanity or ambition. Spenser says of her—

> "In whose brave mind as in a golden coffer,
> All heavenly gifts and riches locked are,
> More rich than pearls of Ind, or gold of Ophir,
> And in her sex more wonderful and rare."

Forty years afterwards, when she was laid to rest in her tomb, Ben Jonson wrote of her—

* Few houses are more full of interesting associations than Wilton; besides those connected with Sidney and his sister, it is remarkable as having been visited by Spenser and Shakespeare, as being the early home of Massinger, and as closely connected with George Herbert.

"Underneath this sable hearse
Lies the subject of all verse,
Sidney's sister, Pembroke's mother;
Death, ere thou hast found another
Learned, fair, and good as she,
Time shall throw a dart at thee."

Soon after Sidney's arrival at Wilton, the Countess of Pembroke's first little son was born, the Pembroke of the above lines; and the care of her baby and companionship of her brother would keep her at Wilton all the summer. The brother and sister read and talked together, sitting perhaps in the pleasant gardens, or walking in the green alleys of the park, or wandering over the neighbouring Wiltshire downs, through the bright days of summer; and it was now that Mary, seeing that her brother had power of invention and skill in expression, urged upon him the planning and writing of some poem or work of literature. By her wish, he began to write a pastoral romance, which he called the "Countess of Pembroke's Arcadia;" it was partly in prose and partly in verse. It was not a studied work, but as the story came he wrote it down on loose sheets of paper, most of it whilst his sister was beside him, and some of it as he rode or hunted over Salisbury Plain. Many of the descriptions of rural scenery he took from scenes he saw before him at Wilton. He did not finish it at Wilton, but took it up again at different times, and sent off the sheets as soon as written to his sister. The want of plan makes the story long and unartistic; perhaps Sidney was aware of this, as he never wished it to be published; but after his death, his sister thought it too rare to be lost to the world, and for some time it was a very popular book, many persons finding great delight in the complicated adventures of the various characters.

Besides writing the "Arcadia Philip Sidney with his

sister worked at a translation of the Psalms into English verse; and in this occupation he found, no doubt, still deeper strength and help against his troubles. In the autumn, Queen Elizabeth again took Leicester into favour, and he probably made peace for Sidney, as in October he returned to Court. The work Sidney had done under his sister's inspiration and encouragement had perhaps made him aware that he had more power of expression as a poet than he had suspected before, and after his return to Court we find him coming before the world as a writer of sonnets. Sidney took the same plan for his sonnets that the Italians always followed, which was to make them all gather around one particular person; the lady whom he chose for the heroine of his sonnets was Penelope, daughter of the Earl of Essex, whom he had known as a little child. There was at one time some idea of a marriage between her and Sidney, but it had come to nothing, and she was now Lady Rich. In these sonnets he calls her Stella, and himself Astrophel. He assumes the poetical language, which was in fashion at the time, when courtiers constantly told the queen that unless they saw her every day they should die like flowers without the sun, and yet no doubt often heartily enjoyed a little freedom from the restraint of her presence.

Philip Sidney's new consciousness of power in writing is also shown in another work which he wrote about his time. There was, no doubt, in that day a great deal of artificial sentiment and unreal feeling put into verse. Italian literature, which was often the model for English, was full of this; and to many persons it would seem as though this affectation of feeling which did not exist, or which had only a slight degree of truth, would tend to produce falseness, and lower the standard of honest truth. Attacks, therefore, became frequent against, not this abuse of poetry merely, but against poetry itself. Philip Sidney

replied to these in a work which he called "The Apologie for Poetrie." He begins with defining what real poetry is, and calls it "the first light-giver to ignorance," the first form under which Truth was taught to man. He illustrates this by the early poets of the Greeks and Romans, who were their first teachers; by the teaching of Truth in later times through Dante, Petrarch, Gower, and Chaucer; and above all, by the use of poetry in the Bible. He shows what was the Greek idea of a poet, when they called him by a word meaning the "maker," and which was also used in earlier English. Other sciences have only regard to what is known by the senses; the poet passes beyond nature, and by the power of imagination places before us things which have never existed; but above all in the poet is the perception of the ideal, so that he can describe to us more lovely and perfect things than any we have seen, not only in nature, but especially in man, so that we learn to know and love what God intended man to be when He created him in His own image. The purpose of poetry Sidney thus defines to be to teach, but to teach by wakening delight in the beauty of the ideal. He divides poetry into three classes: the first and chief is that which sets God before us, such as the poetry of the Bible, of Psalms and hymns, and of such heathen poets as Homer, who seek to show the gods as pure as they can conceive them. The second is poetry teaching philosophy and morals. The third such as paints truly human character and life. He then shows the advantage of poetry over philosophy and over history. The poet presents to the mind "a perfect picture," the philosopher but "a wordish description." The philosopher may discourse to us on the love of country; but we understand far better what this is when we "hear old Anchises speaking in the midst of Troy's flames, or see Ulysses in the fulness of all Calypso's delights bewail his absence from barren, beggarly Ithaca." But, it may be urged, history brings us

images of true things, and these must surpass the fictitious pictures of the poets. "If the question," says Sidney in reply, "were whether it were better to have a particular fact truly or falsely set down, there is no doubt which is to be chosen; but if the question be for your own use and learning, is it then better to have it set down as it should be or as it was?" And it is the poet who paints it as it should be. Sidney then repeats the common charges against poetry. First, that a man may spend his time over more fruitful knowledge. This has been answered by having proved poetry to be the best teacher and mover to virtue, and, therefore, there cannot be a more fruitful knowledge.

To the second charge, that it is the mother of lies, Sidney says that the poet cannot lie, for he never does affirm anything to be true; that when he brings a number of characters before us, giving them names, places of abode, &c., he no more lies than we do when we play at chess and call a piece of wood a bishop. The third charge, that it encourages false sentiment and fancies, Sidney admits has some ground, if what is the abuse of poetry be taken for its use; but, says he, in this case, "it is man's wit which abuseth poetry, and not poetry which abuseth man's wit." It had been said that in earlier times "men were better satisfied in doing things worthy to be written, than in writing things yet to be done;" but, says Sidney, there never was a time so early as when England had no poets; Homer wrote before Greece conquered; "honest King Arthur" had made many a man desire to be a good knight; Alexander the Great, the man of action, was inspired by Achilles, the hero of the "Iliad;" and Sidney himself had found his heart more moved by the ballad of "Chevy Chase" than by the sound of a trumpet.

Sidney then goes on to criticise the poets and dramatists of the day; he speaks of the exaggerations in feeling, and of the affectation in phrases and words, and shows that the

right use of poetry is missed when the outside form becomes the object of the poet's care and chief thought, and especially when it leads him away from the simple words of his own mother-tongue, and he says of our English language, "for the uttering sweetly and properly the conceit (or conception) of the mind, which is the end of speech, that hath it equally with any other tongue in the world." Then he concludes: "since poetry is so full of virtue and delightfulness," and the charges against it are "false or feeble," and "the fault of poet-apes, not poets," he conjures all who read his work "to scorn no more the sacred mysteries of poesy, or laugh at the name of poets;" and he closes by playfully wishing that those who are so dull of heart and ear that they cannot perceive the divine music of poetry may fail in love "for want of skill to write a sonnet," and their memory die from the earth "for want of an epitaph."

In 1583 Sidney married Frances, daughter of Sir Francis Walsingham, his old friend, and the same year Queen Elizabeth knighted him. About this time he and his friend Fulke Greville seemed to have had their imaginations fired by the stories of Drake and Frobisher, and they formed a plan for getting up an expedition against the Spaniards in the New World, but Queen Elizabeth forbade it. Probably Sidney was weary of his Court life, and longed for some real and useful work to do in the world. The war was still going on in the Netherlands against the Spanish tyranny there; it was a cause in which Sidney, and indeed all Englishmen, took deep interest; and when the Earl of Leicester was sent at the head of a force to their assistance, Sidney went with him, and was appointed governor of Flushing. His old friend and second father Languet was now dead, and Sidney had not been many months in the Netherlands before tidings came of the death of his much-loved father, Sir Henry Sidney. Three months afterwards his mother followed her husband to heaven, leaving behind

her the fragrance of a life full of piety, tender lovingness, and much patience. His father died in May, his mother in August. In September an attack was made upon the town of Zutphen, which was strongly defended; in the third onset Sidney was wounded by a musket-ball in the knee. He was carried to the place where the Earl of Leicester stood; and then it was that Sidney, overcome with thirst, called for water. He was about to drink it, when a dying soldier looked with eager longing at the draught, and Sidney, without stopping to quench his own thirst, gave the water to the wounded man, saying, "Thy necessity is even greater than mine." He bore bravely the painful setting and dressing of the wounded limb, for he seems to have felt the strong conviction in his mind that the cause for which he suffered—the cause of the oppressed Protestants against their Spanish tyrants—was the cause of God, of England, and the queen; and the thought that he had not lived in vain in giving his life for this helped to sustain him through the slow torture of the next three weeks. He was taken to Arnheim, where everything was done to save a life so precious to so many, but it was all in vain; after a few days of hope bad symptoms appeared. For himself Sidney seems to have looked upon this time, not as a time for recovery, but only as a delay granted him by God in which he might prepare for death. He sent at once for a friend of his, a Mr. Gifford, who was well known for his powerful preaching, and he was with him constantly till the last moment of his life. His wife also came to him, and his two younger brothers whom he had loved and watched over as a father; and the queen wrote to him a letter with her own hand. But Sidney's greatest comfort and joy now was in the sense of God's great love to him, and in the thought of how this was made sure to him in Jesus Christ, notwithstanding the remembrance of sins which often came into his mind. He said, "I have bound my life to God, and if

the Lord cut me off and suffer me to live no longer, then I shall glorify Him and give myself to his service;" and on the day of his death he exclaimed, "I would not change my joy for the empire of the world." A short time after this, as he lay sinking into the sleep of death, Mr. Gifford said to him, "Sir, if you still have your inward joy and consolation in God, hold up your hand." Immediately his hand was raised and held stretched out a while at full length of his arm. A little later, at two o'clock in the afternoon of Monday, the 17th of October, those who watched beside him saw that the brave and loving soul had left the body and entered into the joy of his Lord. It is impossible to describe the universal grief which the death of Sir Philip Sidney awakened. Queen Elizabeth was overwhelmed with sorrow: and we are told that "it was accounted a sin for any gentleman of quality, for many months after, to appear at Court or city in any light or gaudy apparel." It speaks much for an age which could so heartily appreciate and admire the noble qualities of mind and heart which were the distinction of Sir Philip Sidney. The manner of expressing this admiration and grief is also characteristic of such a time of poetic feeling and song. Whole volumes of sonnets were written in memory of Sidney; Oxford University produced two volumes, Cambridge one; King James of Scotland wrote a sonnet, and more than two hundred other writers wrote verses which still remain, while hundreds of others are now lost. Among the deepest mourners were Sidney's sister Mary and the inner circle of his dearest friends, such as Fulke Greville, Spenser, and others. The Countess of Pembroke expressed her sorrow in verses which she called "The Doleful Lay of Clorinda;" and Spenser mourned for his friend in two poems, "The Ruins of Time," which he dedicated to Mary, Countess of Pembroke, and "Astrophel."

For the last six years Spenser had been in Ireland,

attending to the duties of his office there, getting to understand the state of Ireland and its needs, and, above all, working quietly at the "Faerie Queene." In 1589 he had finished the first three books, and came with them to London. Sir Walter Raleigh, who had known Spenser in Ireland, was at Court then, and he introduced Spenser to Queen Elizabeth, to whom the poet presented his poem. Nearly all the poetry of the time which was not addressed to other individuals gathered around the queen, who, as we have said, was to her people the personification of all that was most admired in that age. Spenser dedicated his poem to her, and while true to the higher purposes of the poem, she occupies, as we shall see, the central place in it. The next year, the first three books of the "Faerie Queene" were published, and were recognised at once as the chief flower of Elizabethan poetry. A collection of Spenser's shorter poems soon followed. Spenser returned to Ireland to continue his work there; and soon after his return he wrote "Colin Clout's come Home Again," which he dedicated to Sir Walter Raleigh. This poem, like "The Shepheard's Calender," was a pastoral, in which Spenser again introduces himself as Colin Clout; and to the other shepherds he tells the story of his late visit to England: of his introduction to the queen, whom he calls Cynthia, and describes as—

> "Her world's bright sun, her heaven's fairest light;"

of how she had received his poem,

> "And it desired at timely hours to hear,"

although she had around her such a throng of poets,

> "Who do their Cynthia immortal make."

Then follows a description, under pastoral names, of many of the poets of the time, amongst others of Shakespeare—

> "A gentler shepherd may nowhere be found,
> Whose muse, full of high thought's invention,
> Doth like himself heroically sound."

But amongst them all Spenser sees none that he can compare to Astrophel; and when a shepherdess asks Colin Clout about the ladies of Queen Elizabeth's Court, he replies that he could praise them all, "but in the highest place, Urania, sister unto Astrophel." Again he says of Queen Elizabeth—

> "Yet will I think of her, yet will I speak,
> As long as life my limbs doth hold together;
> And when as Death these vital bands shall break,
> Her name recorded I will leave for ever."

Up to this time Spenser, though the best poet of the time, had not followed the usual plan of writing sonnets, grouped around one individual. Though every one perfectly understood that what was said in these sonnets did not describe the real feelings of the writer, so that no one was deceived by them, yet to Spenser, trained in a strict regard to God's laws and one of the most earnest lovers of truth, there may have appeared a falseness in such writing which he could not himself make use of; but about this time he met with a lady whom he truly loved, and honestly thought to be the loveliest and sweetest he had ever known. To her, then, he now began to write a series of sonnets. From some other verses we learn that her name was Elizabeth, the name of his mother and his queen. The earlier sonnets describe his first acquaintance with her, when she did not take much notice of him, for Spenser was now forty years old, and she was much younger; but later she learned to see and love the abiding freshness of the poet's mind, which was always young and never could grow old, and the ripe strength and nobleness of his character. He also writes that what he most loves in her is the pure beauty of her mind and character:—

"Men call you fair, and you do credit it,
For that yourself, ye daily such do see;
But the true fair, that is, the gentle wit,
And virtuous mind is much more praised of me.

For all the rest, however fair it be,
Shall turn to naught and lose that glorious hue;
But only that is permanent, and free
From frail corruption, that doth flesh ensue;

That is true beauty; that doth argue you
To be divine and born of heavenly seed;
Derived from that fair Spirit, from whom all true
And perfect beauty did at first proceed.

He only fair, and what He fair hath made;
All other fair like flowers untimely fade."

The new year, 1594, began with great happiness for Spenser, and with bright hopes for the future; and on Easter Day he wrote the following sonnet for his Elizabeth—

"Most glorious Lord of Life, that on this day
Didst make Thy triumph over Death and Sin;
And having harrow'd hell, didst bring away
Captivity thence captive, us to win.

This joyous day, dear Lord, with joy begin,
And grant that we, for whom Thou didest die,
Being with Thy dear blood wash'd clean from sin,
May live for ever in felicity.

And that Thy love, we weighing worthily,
May likewise love Thee for the same again;
And for Thy sake, that all like dear did'st buy,
With love may one another entertain.

So let us love, dear Love, like as we ought,
Love is the lesson which the Lord us taught."

A few weeks after, on St. Barnabas' Day, the 11th of June, Spenser and Elizabeth were married. The series of sonnets concludes with the marriage song, which Spenser

says he wrote for his bride "in lieu of many ornaments." In it we have this description of her on her wedding-day :—

"Lo, where she comes along with portly* pace,
Like Phœbe † from her chamber of the east,
Arising forth to run her mighty race,
Clad all in white, that seems a virgin best;
So well it her beseems, that ye would ween
Some angel she had been.
Her long loose yellow locks like golden wire
Sprinkled with pearl, and pearling flowers atween,
Do like a golden mantle her attire,
And being crownéd with a garland green,
Seem like some maiden queen.
Her modest eyes, abashéd to behold
So many gazers as on her do stare,
Upon the lowly ground affixéd are;
Ne dare lift up her countenance too bold,
But blush to hear her praises sung so loud,
So far from being proud.
Nathless do ye still loud her praises sing,
That all the woods may answer, and your echo ring.

"But if ye saw that which no eyes can see,
The inward beauty of her lively spright,
Garnished with heavenly gifts of high degree,
Much more then would ye wonder at that sight.
There dwells sweet Love and constant chastity,
Unspotted Faith and comely Womanhood,
Regard of Honour, and mild Modesty;
There Virtue reigns as Queen in royal throne,
And giveth laws alone,
The which the base affections do obey,
And yield their services unto her will;
No thought of things uncomely ever may
Thereto approach to tempt her mind to ill.
Had ye once seen these her celestial treasures
And unrevealéd pleasures,
Then would ye wonder, and her praises sing,
That all the woods should answer, and your echo ring.

* Portly, graceful deportment. † The Moon.

"Open the Temple-gates unto my love,
Open them wide that she may enter in,
And all the posts adorn as doth behove,
And all the pillars deck with garlands trim,
For to receive this saint with honour due,
That cometh in to you.
With trembling steps and humble reverence
She cometh in before the Almighty's view;
Of her, ye virgins, learn obedience,
Whenso ye come into those holy places,
To humble your proud faces.
Bring her up to the high altar, that she may
The sacred ceremonies there partake,
The which do endless matrimony make:
And let the roaring organs loudly play
The praises of the Lord in lively notes;
The whiles, with hollow throats,
The choristers the joyous anthem sing,
That all the woods may answer, and their echoes ring.

"Behold, whiles she before the altar stands,
Hearing the holy priest that to her speaks
And blesses her with his two happy hands,
How the red roses flush up in her cheeks,
And the pure snow with goodly vermeil stain,
Like crimson dyed in grain;
That even the angels, which continually
About the sacred altar do remain,
Forget their service and about her fly,
Oft peeping in her face, that seems more fair
The more they on it stare.
But her sad eyes, still fastened on the ground,
Are governéd with goodly modesty
That suffers not one look to glance away,
Which may let in a little thought unsound.
Why blush ye, love, to give to me your hand,
The pledge of all our band?
Sing, ye sweet angels, Alleluya sing,
That all the woods may answer, and your echoes ring."

The happiness which Spenser, no doubt, enjoyed in his home now at Kilcolman, was soon to end. The

year after his marriage he again came over to England, bringing the result of four years more of steady work in three more books of the "Faerie Queene," and an essay on the state of Ireland. While in London he wrote two hymns—"A Hymn of Heavenly Love" and "A Hymn of Heavenly Beauty." These were almost his last poems, and they seem like a glance through the veil into the heavenly world, into which he shortly was to enter. In 1597 he returned to Ireland, and the next year Tyrone's rebellion broke out. Spenser had always been closely associated with the English rule in Ireland, and now his house at Kilcolman was attacked, plundered, and burnt; his youngest child is said to have perished in the flames. Spenser with his wife and two little boys escaped to England, and they had lodging at an inn in Westminster, where soon afterwards Spenser died. He was buried, at his own wish, in the Abbey beside Chaucer, his master, as he loved to call him.

We must now try to form some idea of Spenser's great poem, the "Faerie Queene." According to his original design, the poem was to consist of two parts. The first was to describe, under an allegory, the earnest struggle of an individual towards a perfect ideal of character and life. The second part was to represent the perfect ideal of political and social life. The central figure in both parts of the poem was to be Prince Arthur, who comes back again into English literature, when England needs him, as the still higher ideal. In him were combined all the virtues essential to a perfect character, and in the first part of the poem he is able thus to come to the succour of every virtue when tempted to the uttermost and needing help; in the second he was to reign as perfect sovereign of the perfect state. Prince Arthur thus represents the Grace of God, which we may "obtain in every time of need;" and as this is said to be "laid up for us in Christ,"

so in the perfect character, in the office as succourer of the tempted, and in the future reign, there is a shadowing forth in Prince Arthur of the character and work of Christ, though Spenser would not venture to represent the Son of God under any allegorical personification. Plato and Aristotle had both discussed what elements were necessary for a perfect character, and upon this groundwork had been set up twelve virtues which were generally received as essential to the complete man. Each of these virtues has to resist its own peculiar trials, and each has to gain its own separate victories; so Spenser, instead of representing them as combined in one man, makes each virtue to be personified in the allegory by a separate knight. The first part of the poem was then to be divided into twelve books, and each book was to contain the struggles and trials of a single virtue under the figure of a single knight. They were to be knights of the Faerie Queen, who is called Gloriana, and she represents in the allegory the Glory of God; and it is for this high aim that the whole action of the poem is carried on. The meaning of Faerie is spiritual; but all spiritual life must have action in the outward world. It is here that a spiritual quality must be tried, here that it must fight and win its victory; and the spiritual and the outward are thus so closely united, that Spenser uses the same allegorical figures to represent both spiritual and outward things. Thus while the Glory of God is the highest object of devotion and service in the spiritual world, so in the outward world of Spenser's day, every Englishman felt that his first duty and highest honour was to serve the queen; and as Elizabeth represented the triumph of Protestantism, which Spenser regarded as specially the cause of God, and her rule secured also the progress of all the best interests of the nation, so to Spenser there would be no irreverence or servile flattery in making the Faerie Queene, Gloriana, stand at once both for the Glory of God and for Queen

Elizabeth. Spenser had always lived with the keenest interest in events of his time, and he had been accustomed to see in them all the guiding hand of God, and to weigh their importance according to their influence on religion; and it is because to him the spiritual is so present in the outward world, and because of his greater reverence and faith, that we find the events of the time so closely woven into his great spiritual allegory.

He did not live to finish more than six books and part of the seventh, so that his grand design comes to us only as a fragment. As the first essential quality of a true man, he places Holiness, which is perfect faithfulness to God. This is represented by the Red Cross Knight, and forms the subject of the first book. The second is Temperance, or Sir Guyon, and is the control of the body by the soul in accordance with the laws of God. These two books deal with the relation of man to God; Spenser then takes Love, as the great bond uniting human beings to one another, and this is made the subject of the third and fourth books; and is represented by Britomart, or Chastity; and by Cambel and Triamond, or Friendship. Next Spenser takes Justice, which is also essential in the true relation between man and man, and this quality is personified by the knight Sir Artegal. The sixth book has for its subject Courtesy, or the duty we owe to one another in the lighter intercourse of life; and this is personified by Calidore, whose name means the beautifully gifted, and may be supposed, also, to stand for Sir Philip Sidney, who is always spoken of as "the very perfect gentle knight" of his time. The seventh book was probably intended to have been Constancy, the virtue which makes us, while practising courtesy, yet hold fast to truth and right; but of this book only fragments remain. The spiritual truths allegorised are throughout illustrated by men and events of the time. For the metre of his poem Spenser took the old French "Chant Royal," a

metre used in poems celebrating the Glory of God; but he added a line, so as to break the monotony of the French metre, and suggest the close of a stanza. This is the metre of the "Faerie Queene," and as Spenser was the first to adopt it, it is called the Spenserian stanza. It has nine lines, rhymed thus:—

. . . . . plain
. . . . . shield
. . . . . remain
. . . . . field
. . . . . wield
. . . . . bit
. . . . . yield
. . . . . sit
. . . . . fit

And the last line has always an extra foot in it.

Although the purpose of the "Faerie Queene" is deeply religious, and full of a noble poetry of its own, the story of the allegory is also rich in the most charming fancies, and the sweetest descriptions of green forest glades, banks of flowers, lovely gardens, strange sea-caverns, while the adventures of the knights are full of wonder and romance. The "Faerie Queene," though not finished, is one of the longest poems in the world; and it will be impossible, therefore, to do more than sketch the story of one of the knights; but though this may give a slight idea of Spenser's abundant imagination and skill in invention, it can give no idea of the bright fancy and musical verse, which is the dainty outside dress of the poem, nor of the deep religious feeling, which is its inward soul.

The Faerie Queene, Gloriana, held a yearly feast, at which all the knights assembled, and undertook any adventures to which they might be called. On the first day a "tall clownish young man" entered, and falling down before the queen, begged to be allowed to undertake any adven-

ture that might happen during the feast. This being granted him, he sat himself down upon the floor. Soon after came a fair lady, dressed in black, riding on a white ass, with a dwarf leading a war horse laden with a knight's arms. She complained to the Faerie Queene that a dragon had shut up her father and mother in a castle of brass, and had kept them there for many years as prisoners; and she begged the queen to send some knight to fight with the dragon and free them. Immediately the clownish young man started up, and asked to be appointed to that adventure. The lady at first seemed rather doubtful of him; and she told him no one could succeed in this adventure, unless he wore the armour she had brought with her. He put it on, and instantly he seemed the "goodliest man in all that company;" and mounting the courser, he went forth with the lady. The young man represents Holiness, ready for the hardest service, but not seeking the highest place. The lady is Truth, the guide and companion of Holiness; she is called Una, or one, because she represents the whole body of Truth, and not mere fragments. She leads at her side a milk-white lamb, the symbol of perfect purity; and the dwarf, who lags behind and carries "her bag of needments at his back," represents the bodily life of man with those things necessary to it; for Spenser, spiritual poet as he is, always keeps in mind the absolute necessity of the outward life to the growth and action of the inward. The armour of Holiness is the "whole armour of God," described by St. Paul in his Epistle to the Ephesians—the breast-plate of Righteousness, the shield of Faith, the sword of the Spirit, the helmet of the Hope of Salvation, the loins girt with Truth:—

> "But on his breast a bloody cross he bore,
> The dear remembrance of his dying Lord,
> For whose sweet sake that glorious badge he wore,
> And dead (as living) ever Him adored;

Upon his shield the like was also scored
For sovereign hope, which in His help he had."

Faith, represented by the shield, and Righteousness by the breast-plate, are thus shown to be founded in Christ, and the knight is called "the Red Cross Knight." The father and mother of the lady stand for Adam and Eve, and represent the whole human race, enthralled by Satan, the "old Serpent" or dragon. The subject of the first book, then, is the setting free of the human race by Holiness guided by Truth. The achievement is undertaken for the glory of God by the good soldier of Jesus Christ; and whenever the battle becomes too hard for human strength, Christ, the perfect ideal, comes with grace to help in time of need. Before the final victory is won, Holiness must be purified and strengthened by trial; and the necessity has to be shown for the closest union between Holiness and Truth.

The Red Cross Knight and the lady set forth together; but soon a storm arose, and in order to avoid it they took shelter in a wood. This wood represents the world; and in it were all kinds of trees: the pine, the cedar, the vine, the oak, the beech, the cypress, the laurel, the willow, the olive, the myrrh, &c.; typical of the trade, the pleasure, the strength, the war, the sorrow, the glory, the tears, the healing, of life. In this wood they lost their way, but following the most beaten track, they were led by it into the thickest part of the wood, and found themselves in front of a dark cave. Una knew this to be the dismal dwelling-place of the monster Error; and she warned the knight of their danger, while the dwarf cried, "Fly, fly, this is no place for living men." But the brave Red Cross Knight went into the darkness of the cave; and his glorious armour made a little light, so that he could see the monster there. It was something like a woman, but had the long body and tail of a serpent, full of deadly stings. Besides herself

there was a whole brood of little Errors of different shapes, but all hideously ugly. She rushed forward as the Red Cross Knight entered, but directly she saw the gleam of his shining armour she recoiled, for she hated light above everything. But the knight, drawing his sword, sprang forward, and prevented her retreat. Then gathering all her strength, she threw herself upon his shield of Faith, and wound her huge tail suddenly around his body, so that he could not move hand or foot—"God help the man so wrapt in Error's endless train." The lady, sad to see his plight, cried out to cheer him, "Now, now, Sir Knight, show what ye be. Add faith unto your force, and be not faint, strangle her, else she sure will strangle thee." This roused the knight; and putting forth all his strength, he got one hand free, with which he gripped the monster's throat, so that she was forced to loose her hold on him. Then seizing his sword, he struck at her "with more than manly force," and separated her head from her body. Having freed himself from the little Errors, which began to creep about his legs, he again mounted his horse, and with praise from his lady, retraced the path to the entrance of the wood.

They now went on their way without more adventures till, as evening was coming on, they saw upon the road an old man dressed in black, with bare feet and a long gray beard. He had a book hanging from his belt, and his eyes were bent on the ground: as he walked he prayed, "and often knocked his breast as one that did repent." He spoke to the knight, who asked him if there was any adventure to be undertaken in those parts. The old man told him of a wicked knight who lived not very far off, who wasted the country far and wide, and was a foul disgrace to knighthood. Then the brave knight would have gone at once to attack him, but his gentle lady urged that he had already spent his strength in his late conflict with the

monster Error, and needed rest; so the old man immediately suggested that they should take shelter for the night in his cell. This was a little lowly hermitage down in a dale by the side of a forest, and here they spent the evening, the old man entertaining them with fair discourse :—

> "For that old man of pleasing words had store,
> And well could file his tongue as smooth as glass;
> He told of saints and popes, and ever more
> He strowed an Ave-Mary after and before."

We can easily see that all this outside show of artificial religion means that the old man is a hypocrite: and he was in fact the great enchanter Archimago. In him Spenser represents any false system of religion which seeks to separate Truth from Holiness, but more especially the corrupt teaching of the Romish Church. The great aim of Archimago, therefore, was to separate the Red Cross Knight from his true guide and companion Una. In order to do this the enchanter called up the aid of his evil spirits, and in the night he produced a false appearance of Una which so misled the knight that he was filled with horror at what seemed to him a wicked monster in a fair form. As soon as it was light he got his horse and called the dwarf and rode away into the forest, leaving the real Una in her bower in the little hermitage. An hour or two afterwards Una arose, and when she was ready for her journey asked for the knight, and then she found that he was gone and had left her alone in the hermit's cell. The only thing she could do was to go after him and seek him in the forest, and this she did most faithfully for many a weary day.

In the meantime the Red Cross Knight was riding on his way when he met with a Saracen knight, a large-limbed, strong man, who carried a great shield upon which was carved his name, Sans-foi (without Faith). "He cared not for God

or man a point." Riding with him was a lady clad in scarlet, embroidered with gold and pearls. The Red Cross Knight lowered his spear as he saw them coming on, and the lady bid the Saracen knight attack him. Then a desperate fight followed, in which the Red Cross Knight stood firm, until at last Sans-foi cried out, "Curse on that cross, that keeps thee from the bitter end:" for only through Christ could Holiness resist the attacks of doubt and unbelief. Then the fierce Saracen, raising his sword, hewed away a part of the Red Cross Knight's helmet (the Hope of Salvation), but he could not strike his heart, which was protected by his shield of Faith. At last, putting forth all his strength, the knight struck Sans-foi so good a blow that it cleft his head, and he tumbled to the earth (his mother) and died. The Red Cross Knight told the dwarf to bring Sans-foi's shield, and was again setting forth, when the lady came to him, crying, "Mercy, mercy, sir." She told him that Sans-foi had taken her prisoner against her will, that he was the eldest of three brothers, the second being Sans-loi (without law, lawlessness following unbelief), and the third Sans-joi (without joy, joylessness always following unbelief and lawlessness). She said her own name was Fidessa (true faith); and Holiness, who "thinketh no evil," believed in her, and took her for a guide and companion instead of Una, about whom he had been so deceived. But this lady's real name was Duessa (falsehood, or doubleness, in contrast to Una, oneness). She represents in the spiritual purpose of the poem the Church of Rome, identical in Spenser's mind with falseness and corruption; and as the glory of God seemed to him to be centred in Protestantism as represented by Elizabeth, so the corrupt Church was easily associated with Mary Queen of Scots; for from 1580, when Spenser had begun to work upon the "Faerie Queene," to 1587, when Mary Queen of Scots was executed, and Spenser was completing the first three books

of his poem, England was kept in constant alarm through plots aiming at the life of Elizabeth, and the establishment of the Roman Catholic Church in England by placing Mary Queen of Scots upon the throne.

The knight and his new guide Duessa travelled till noon, when the sun was at its height; and as Duessa could not bear a strong light, the knight suggested that they should rest a while under the shade of two trees. While here the knight raised his hand and plucked a branch to make a garland for the lady's head; but what was his astonishment to see drops of blood trickle down the tree, while a voice begged him not to break the boughs, and told him that the two trees were a knight and a lady, Fradubio and Frælissa, who had been turned into trees by a witch, Duessa. Fradubio had in his youth loved Frælissa; then he had been in doubt whether Frælissa or Duessa were the fairer; so Duessa by her false arts had made Frælissa appear hideous and deformed, and for a while Fradubio had been quite led away by her deceptions; but happening at last to see Duessa in her real ugliness, and being convinced that she was deluding him, he determined to forsake her. She saw his intention, and had shut up both him and Frælissa in these trees, nor could they again return to their true life till they had been bathed in a living well.

Spenser seems here to represent by Fradubio (between doubts) the active, searching intellect of the time, which, especially in Italy, doubted the teaching of the Roman Church, and turned with enthusiasm to the teaching of Plato, finding Platonism (Frælissa) fairer and purer than the corrupt Church. The Roman Church (Duessa) seeks to regain power over the intellect by misrepresentations of Platonism,* and by the concealment of its own corruptions; but the false dealing is discovered;

* One of the warnings of the priests was, "Beware of the Greeks lest you be made a heretic."

and there is the final breaking away of the intellectual life of the time from the Church. Then the power of the Roman Church is employed to stifle and cramp intellectual energy, and to shut up the truth contained in Platonism. That there may be free life for the intellect and scope for its work, and that philosophy may take its true place in the world, it needs that both should be bathed in the living well of Christ's teaching, "the well of living water" purifying and giving energy to all true life.

Duessa was almost dead with fright while Fradubio was telling his story; but the good knight suspected nothing, and did his best to cheer her; and then they began their journey again, travelling along a broad, beaten highway, over which many feet had passed, till they came in sight of a glittering palace, where Duessa proposed they should stop. This was the Palace of Pride. It was built of bricks, put together without any mortar; the walls were very high, but not at all thick, and they were covered over in front with thin gold foil; at the back, where there was no one to see, the building was ruinous and old, though it was cunningly painted to hide its defects. It stood on a hill of sand which was constantly falling away. The knight and the lady passed in through the open gates, which were kept by the porter Malvenu, and on to the hall, where sat the queen of the palace, Lucifera, on an exceedingly high throne, shining with gold and precious stones. Around her was a crowd of lords and ladies; but she took no notice of them, for she disdained to look down, and hated everything lowly. One thing, however, she looked at with great delight; for in her hand she held a mirror, in which she was constantly admiring herself. She called herself the daughter of Jupiter, because Jupiter was the greatest person she had ever heard of; if she had known of any one higher she would have said she was his daughter. She had made herself a queen, and ruled, not by laws, but by policy.

As soon as the Red Cross Knight and Duessa came into her presence, they were brought by her usher Vanity to the foot of her throne, where they knelt before her, and told her they were come to see her royal state; but she scarcely thanked them, and took no more notice of them. Meantime her lords and ladies, seeing two strangers, began to pull out their curls, pinch up their ruffs, and set out their dresses. Presently the queen rose from her throne and went out to take a drive in her chariot, while her lords and ladies walked beside it. The chariot was so high she had to climb up into it, and it was drawn by six animals, each ridden by one of her councillors, while Satan was the driver. There was Idleness dressed as a monk, and half asleep, riding on an ass; Gluttony on a pig, eating and drinking as he went; Envy on a wolf, in a dress painted over with eyes, and nursing a poisonous snake; and Wrath on a raging lion. Duessa got as near as she could to the gilded chariot of Lucifera; but the Red Cross Knight lagged behind, as one who did not like his company.

When they came back to the palace, they found a stranger knight had arrived. This was Sans-joi, the younger brother of Sans-foi. He saw the dwarf with his fallen brother's shield; and he challenged the Red Cross Knight to battle, as the destroyer of Sans-foi. The next day everything was arranged for the combat, which took place in the presence of Queen Lucifera and her Court. The shield of Sans-foi and Duessa herself were to be the reward of the victor. It was a desperate fight, and the Red Cross Knight received many wounds from Sans-joi, but at last he got the best of it, and was just on the point of giving the death-blow to Sans-joi, when suddenly a magic cloud hid his foe from his sight, and nowhere could he find him. The Red Cross Knight was, however, declared the victor, and was conducted in triumph to the palace. In the night Duessa went to the Queen of Night and told her how Sans-

joi was wounded, and she and Queen Night together carried him to the Infernal regions, to be cured by Æsculapius. Meanwhile the dwarf had told the Red Cross Knight of how he had discovered a number of persons shut up in a most dismal dungeon underground. These were the prisoners of Pride. There were Nebuchadnezzar, Crœsus, Nimrod, proud Tarquinus, Scipio, Hannibal, Cæsar, and Pompey, with many women also, Semiramis, and Cleopatra, and others who had given themselves up to Pride. When the knight heard this, he determined to leave the palace at once; and before dawn he and the dwarf made their escape. Duessa found in the morning that the knight was gone, and she set out to look for him; at noon she found him sitting in the shade, with his armour beside him, near a fountain. There was a story about this fountain. It happened that a nymph of Diana had grown weary in following the chase, and had sat down to rest in the midst of the race. The goddess changed her into a fountain; and whoever drank of the water grew faint and feeble also. Just as the knight was sitting here, with his armour off, and having drunk of the enfeebling water, a dreadful sound was suddenly heard, and an enormous giant appeared, three times the height of the tallest man. His name was Orgoglio, son of the earth and the wind; in his hand he carried a huge oak-tree, with which he pounded his enemies. The Red Cross Knight could make but a feeble resistance to this foe who came upon him in his weakness; he was taken prisoner by the giant and carried to his castle, where he was thrust into the deepest dungeon, while Duessa became the lady of Orgoglio. Things had now come to such a pass that the natural strength of the Red Cross Knight could no longer help him; and it is at this point in the poem that Spenser brings in Prince Arthur.

The dwarf, taking up the armour of the knight, went in search of aid, and met Una. But we must now go back

and see what had happened to her since she was separated from the Red Cross Knight by Archimago. She could not understand why he should have left her, but with the trust which belongs to Truth, she, "most faithful maid," began to seek him through the forest. One day she was resting on the grass, where—

> "Her angel's face,
> As the great eye of Heaven, shinéd bright,
> And made a sunshine in the shady place,"

when a ramping lion rushed suddenly upon her; but as he came near her, he stopped, and then, instead of tearing her to pieces, he came gently to her, and licked her "weary feet" and "lily hands," as though compassionating her lonely deserted state; and when she again mounted her white ass, to continue her wanderings, the lion went with her as her protector. Spenser here represents by the lion, Reason, which, before the Reformation itself, became the guard of Truth, while attacking the Ignorance and Superstition which were the sources of so many evils. Presently Una finds a beaten track, and following it she saw before her a damsel carrying a pot of water. Una called to her, but she threw down her pitcher and fled at sight of the lion. This is Superstition throwing away its spells and flying at the sight of Reason and Truth. But Una and the lion followed her home, and while she and her mother Ignorance were shutting the door against them, the lion forced it open, and he and Una entered the house. The old woman represents the religion of Ignorance, the only motive of which is fear. Nine hundred Pater-nosters she repeated every day, and three times nine hundred Aves. She fasted, wore sackcloth, and three times a week sat in ashes. In league with them was a robber, Kirk-rapine (the plunder of the people by the Church working on their ignorance and fear), and every night he came and brought to them his ill-gotten gain. But now Reason and Truth were in the

abode of Ignorance and Superstition, and as soon as Kirkrapine came, the lion rushed out upon him, killed him, and "the thirsty land drank up his life." Reference is made here to the outward attacks on the greed and unjust exactions of the Church, which Reason brought against it, before the Reformation of inward life and teaching.

The next morning, Una and the lion left the house of Ignorance, and soon she saw, as she believed, the Red Cross Knight himself. There was great joy expressed at the meeting, but they had not travelled far before another knight appeared, who on his shield bore the name Sans-loi. This was the second of the three brothers, with two of whom the Red Cross Knight had already fought. He immediately attacked Una's companion, and quickly threw him to the ground. In great distress Una flew to the fallen knight, but when his helmet was unlaced, there appeared, not the face of the Red Cross Knight, but of the old enchanter Archimago. Leaving the enchanter in a swoon, Sans-loi seized Una, and though the lion fought for her to the death, Sans-loi carried her off. Una had now lost her protector, the lion (for it is not by Reason that Truth shall finally prevail), and her only resource was to fill the air with her cries, hoping that some one might come to her rescue :—

> "Eternal Providence, exceeding thought,
> Where none appears can make itself a way!
> A wondrous way it for this lady wrought."

A troop of fauns and satyrs in the wood were dancing round old Sylvanus, and hearing Una's cries, all came rushing through the trees and bushes to see what was the matter. The cruel and cowardly Sans-loi was so frightened at the sight of them that off he rode, leaving Una at their mercy. "The wood-born people" were filled with pity for Una's tender youth and forlorn state, and with reverent admiration of her pure beauty.

"They all as glad as birds of joyous prime,
Thence led her forth, about her dancing round,
Shouting and singing all a shepherd's rhyme,
And with green branches strewing all the ground,
Do worship her as Queen with olive garland crowned.
And all the way their merry pipes they sound,
That all the woods with double echo ring;
And with their hornéd feet do wear the ground,
Leaping like wanton kids in pleasant spring,
So towards old Sylvanus they her bring."

Una remained for a long time among the savage people, trying to teach them the truth, and to turn them from idolatry; by which Spenser represents the presence of Truth among savage nations, as the "light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world." At last there came into the forest "a noble, warlike knight—plain, faithful, true, and enemy of shame." This was Satyrane, whose father was one of the "wood-born people," and after he had gone through many labours and adventures, it was his custom to come now and then to the woods to see his old father and relations. He wondered at Una's "wisdom, heavenly rare," and learned readily her teaching of faith and truth; and when she told him of the Red Cross Knight, he generously offered to help her to find him. In Satyrane, Spenser represents the Greek learning, honest and earnest in receiving truth, and helpful, at its revival, in leading on to the Reformation.

Satyrane and Una now set forth together; but soon they met with a pilgrim, who told them he had seen the Red Cross Knight slain, and that the knight who had killed him was now washing his wounds at a fountain hard by. The pilgrim was, of course, old Archimago, and the knight Sans-loi. The cruel Saracen, as soon as he saw Una, attempted again to seize her, but Satyrane attacked him, and kept him at bay, while Una fled through the forest. She had not gone far before she met the dwarf, laden with

the Red Cross Knight's armour. The sight of this filled her with fresh alarm; and when she heard the story of his capture and imprisonment in the castle of Orgoglio, she was in the greatest distress, and she resolved to find him alive or dead.

> "Long tossed with storms and beat with bitter wind,
> High over hills and low adown the dale,
> She wandered many a wood, and measured many a vale."

At this point of greatest need for Una and the Red Cross Knight, Prince Arthur appeared (for he only could again unite Holiness and Truth). He was dressed in glittering armour, that "shined far away;" and he had a shield made of one diamond, which no weapon could even make a mark upon. He saw that Una was in sorrow, and begged her to tell him her trouble. She objected at first, for "Great grief," she said, "will not be told, and can more easily be thought than said."

> "'Right so,' quoth he, 'but he that never would
> Could never; will to might gives greater aid.'
> 'But grief,' quoth she, 'does greater grow displayed,
> If then it find not help, and breeds despair.'
> 'Despair breeds not,' quoth he, 'where faith is staid.'"

At last she told him her story, but—

> "Ere she had ended all, she 'gan to faint;
> But he her comforted and fair bespake:
> 'Certes, madam, ye have great cause of plaint,
> That stoutest heart, I ween, could cause to quake;
> But be of cheer, and comfort to you take,
> For till I have acquit your captive knight,
> Assure yourself, I will not you forsake.'
> His cheerful words revived her cheerless sprite;
> So forth they went, the dwarf them guiding ever right."

As soon as they came in sight of the castle of Orgoglio, Prince Arthur sent his squire to blow his horn before the

castle gates. At the sound of this horn (the call of the Gospel) every gate and door flew open, so that the Prince could freely enter. As soon as the giant heard this sound, he came rushing forth, followed by Duessa, who was dressed in scarlet, with a golden cup in her hand, and she was mounted high upon a dreadful beast with many heads, each wearing a crown. The Prince attacked the giant, who soon fell before him, and as the breath passed out of his body, the huge giant shrivelled up like an empty bladder, for all his greatness was only inflation. Meantime the Prince's squire had attacked the beast; but Duessa, sprinkling some drops from her cup upon him, his senses were overpowered, and he fell to the ground, while the beast set his claws upon his neck. (This represents the silencing of the preaching of the Gospel by the Romish Church.) But soon the flashing of the light from the Prince's shield blinded the beast, so that he reeled and fell; and then Duessa, seeing that Orgoglio was killed, was about to fly, when the squire springing up caught her, and brought her to his lord. Thus they entered the castle, where they met a very old, grey-haired man (Ignorance) whose only answer to every question was, "I cannot tell." After passing through richly decked halls, and beside an altar—"on which true Christians' blood was often spilt, and holy martyrs often done to die," they reached the dungeon where the Red Cross Knight was shut up. The Prince went down into it—

> "For neither darkness foul, nor filthy bands,
> Nor noisome smell his purpose could withhold
> (Entire affection hateth nicer hands),
> But that with constant zeal, and courage bold,
> After long pains and labours manifold,
> He found the means that prisoner up to rear,
> Whose feeble thighs, unable to uphold
> His pinéd corse, him scarce to light could bear,
> A rueful spectacle of Death and ghastly drear."

But changed as he was, he was gladly welcomed by the faithful Una "in weal or woe," and the past was all forgotten in the present joy. All this while the squire had not let Duessa slip. Her scarlet robes and her false decorations were taken from her, and she was found to be an ugly, old hag; and then they let her go, as she could deceive people no longer.

The Red Cross Knight and Una now continued their journey together; but before Prince Arthur left them, he told them about himself, and how he was wholly devoted to the service of Gloriana; and he gave the knight at parting a diamond box containing a salve which would heal every wound, while the knight in return gave him—

> "A book wherein his Saviour's Testament
> Was writ with golden letters rich and brave;
> A work of wondrous grace, and able souls to save."

The knight and the lady had not gone far before they saw an armed knight galloping fast towards them. He was in a state of the greatest terror, and had a rope hanging round his neck. He would scarcely stop to tell his story, but the Red Cross Knight at last forced it from him; and he related how he, Sir Trevisan, was riding with his friend Sir Terwin, each being depressed at his want of success with the lady whom he loved, when they met "a man of Hell, that calls himself Despair." The two knights, whose names probably indicate a looking only to earth in the trials of life, listened to the words of the evil man, who persuaded them that their future life in this world was without hope. He then gave to Sir Trevisan the rope, and to Sir Terwin a knife. The latter stabbed himself, while his companion fled in terror. The Red Cross Knight wished to encounter Despair, and Sir Trevisan consented to show him the way to his cave. It was a hollow cavern, "dark, doleful, and dreary;" all around were "old stocks

and stubs of trees," on which many wretched men had hanged themselves. In the cave sat Despair upon the ground, and beside him was the still bleeding body of Sir Terwin. When the Red Cross Knight reproached Despair with having caused the death of Sir Terwin, he answered with the plausible argument—

> "'He there does now enjoy eternal rest
> And happy ease, which thou dost want and crave,
> And further from it daily wanderest;
> What if some little pain the passage have,
> That makes frail flesh to fear the bitter wave?
> Is not short pain well borne, that brings long ease
> And lays the soul to sleep in quiet grave?
> Sleep after toil, port after stormy seas,
> Ease after war, death after life, does greatly please.'"

But the Red Cross Knight, who sees the high purposes of life, and feels God's presence in it all, nobly replies—

> "'The term of life is limited,
> Ne may a man prolong nor shorten it;
> The soldier may not move from watchful sted,
> Nor leave his stand, until his captain bid.
> Who life did limit by Almighty doom,
> (Quoth he) knows best the terms established;
> And he that points the sentinel his room,
> Doth license him depart at sound of morning droom.'"

Then Despair, finding that the knight's faith in God will not allow him to look with hopelessness or weariness on this life, tried to shake his faith in God's love by putting before him all his failures and shortcomings, his forsaking of Una, his service of Duessa, his capture by Orgoglio; and overwhelmed by the sight of these things the knight's faith in the mercy and grace of God began to give way. When Despair saw this, he put into his hand a sharp keen dagger; but just as the knight had lifted his hand, Una snatched the knife from him, and threw it on the ground, crying—

"'Fie, fie, faint-hearted knight,
What meanest thou by this reproachful strife?
Is this the battle, which thou vaunt'st to fight
With that fire-mouthéd dragon, horrible and bright?

"Come, come away, frail, silly fleshly wight,
Ne let vain words bewitch thy manly heart,
Ne devilish thoughts dismay thy constant sprite,
In heavenly mercies hast thou not a part?
Why shouldst thou then despair that chosen art?
Where justice grows, there grows eke greater grace,
The which doth quench the brand of hellish smart,
And that accurs'd handwriting doth deface;
Arise, Sir Knight, arise, and leave this curséd place.'"

Thus Una roused her knight from his depression, and reassured him of God's mercy; but she saw that he had been too much shaken and weakened by his long imprisonment to undertake at once the fight with the dragon; and she planned, therefore, to take him to an ancient house not far away, where he might rest, and be strengthened and refreshed. This was the House of Holiness, which was governed by a holy woman, Dame Cœlia. She had three daughters, Fidelia, Speranza, and Charissa (Faith, Hope, and Charity). The House of Holiness, to which Una (Truth) leads the knight, is in every way a contrast to the House of Pride, to which Duessa (False Religion) had taken him; and as the House of Pride represents the life of this world only, "the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life," so the House of Holiness stands for the life of godliness, and represents Spenser's ideal Church. When Una and the knight arrived they found the door fastened; but as soon as they knocked ("knock, and it shall be opened unto you"), they were admitted at once by the porter Humilta (humility is the first step towards God). They passed in, "stooping low, for strait and narrow was the way which he did show" ("Strait is the gate, and narrow is the way which leadeth unto life").

Within the court a Franklin named Zeal ("Strive to enter in") welcomed them, and he led them on to the hall, where they were received by a "gentle squire, of mild demeanour and rare courtesy," named Reverence, who brought them to the lady of the house. Dame Cœlia knew Una, and her heart was filled with joy at the sight of her; and she gladly welcomed the Red Cross Knight. While they were talking together, there entered two most lovely maidens linked arm in arm, the elder of whom was Fidelia; she was arrayed all in lily white; the very light of heaven shone in her face, which was radiant with victorious joy. In her right hand she bore a cup of gold, filled with wine and water (the "cup of salvation"), and although a serpent (the power of Satan to destroy) had entered the cup, and "horror made to all that did behold," Faith "no whit did change her constant mood," assured of the victory of good over evil; in her other hand "she fast did hold a book, that was both signed and sealed with blood" (the promises of God).

Her younger sister Speranza was dressed in blue; there was less assurance of joy in her face, and her eyes were ever turned to heaven in prayer (for hope has not the confidence of faith). She bore a silver anchor on which she leaned. After discourse between the two maidens and Una and the knight, a groom, whose name was Obedience, led the knight to rest. The next morning Fidelia, by Una's request, began to teach the knight her heavenly learning. She "opened his dull eyes that light might in them shine," and enabled him to read her sacred book "that none could read except she did them teach." She was able with her words "to kill and raise to life the heart that she did thrill;" and her teaching brought before the knight so strongly his error in forsaking the pure and faithful Una, and in allowing himself to be led by Duessa to the House of Pride, that he fell into the greatest anguish. Then Speranza "gave him

comfort sweet," and taught him how to take hold on her anchor; and Patience, the wise physician, was sent for, who, with Penance, Remorse, and Repentance, undertook his cure. Under their treatment he had to suffer many things, and sometimes—

> "His own dear Una, hearing evermore
> His rueful shrieks and groanings, often tore
> Her guiltless garments, and her golden hair,
> For pity of his pain and anguish sore;
> Yet all with patience wisely did she bear,
> For well she wist his crime could else be never clear."

At length he was brought to her sound and strong, and now he was introduced to Charissa, the youngest sister. She was married and had many little children, one a young baby which she held in her loving arms, while the others played around her. She was dressed in a yellow robe, and had a circlet of gold upon her head, and by her side was a pair of turtle doves. Charissa taught the knight of love and righteousness, and then she called a godly matron, Mercy, who took him to a hospital or religious house near by, where seven good men had "vowed all their life to service of high Heaven's King," and spent their days in works of love. They represent every form of Christian work carried on for the good of others. The first received and entertained all passing travellers needing food and lodging. The second gave alms to the poor. The third provided clothing for those in want of it. The fourth cared for all captives and prisoners. The fifth nursed the sick and comforted the dying. The sixth had charge of the dead, providing decent burial and decking the graves with flowers. The seventh helped and protected widows and orphans. Here the knight was trained in deeds of love and mercy, and after he had been thoroughly practised in these he was taken to the top of a hill where an aged man dwelt called Heavenly Contemplation (both activity and thought being necessary

to a complete life of godliness). From the summit of the highest mount the Red Cross Knight was shown the heavenly city, the New Jerusalem, where dwells eternal happiness and peace. He was so enchanted at the sight that he wished at once to leave the world and go to it, but the old man told him that before he hung up his shield within those walls, he must fight the good fight with the dragon; but after he had won that famous victory he would enter that city and be "a saint among those saints," and should be known in future ages as "St. George of Merry England, the sign of victory."

And now the Red Cross Knight was ready for the conflict with the dragon, so he and Una left the House of Holiness, and went on their journey until they came to the land where was the brazen tower in which Una's parents were shut up. Then they heard a most hideous roaring sound, and presently they saw the dragon "stretched upon the sunny side of a great hill." At the gleam of the knight's armour that "heaven with light did fill," the monster roused himself to battle, and came on towards them "half flying, half footing" in his haste. His body was covered with brazen scales, his tail was nearly three furlongs long and armed with two stings, while in his open jaws were three rows of iron teeth. His huge wings shaded the land like the shadows of mountains, and his eyes shone like fiery beacons seen from many a shire upon the mountain tops. The knight prepared himself for the combat, while Una withdrew to a hill, whence she could see what passed, and there she gave him the best help she could by praying for him.

As soon as the dragon was near enough, the knight couched his spear, and rode full tilt at him; but no weapon could pierce his strong scales; and with a sweep of his long tail, he brought both horse and rider to the ground. They, however, quickly sprang up

again; and then the dragon, rising in the air, came down with a swoop upon them, and carried both horse and man across the plain. Clutched in the dragon's grasp, the knight attempted to thrust his spear into the neck of the monster, but it slipped off the smooth scales, and striking close under his left wing, then wide outspread, it inflicted a deep wound, from which poured a river of black blood all over the land. The beast could fly no longer, but fell to the earth with its prey. The knight again tried to thrust his sword between the scales of brass, but to no purpose; and the dragon, finding he could not fly, in grief and anguish "loudly brayed, that like was never heard," whilst he sent from his mouth a blast of fire, that singed the face and beard of the knight, so that he stepped backwards, and in doing so fell into a well. The dragon, seeing his foe disappear, raised his huge body, and clapped his wings in all the pride of victory. When Una from her hill saw this, "Great woe and sorrow did her soul assay," but her prayers might still help her knight; and all the night long she continued in prayer to God for him. When morning rose—

> "Up rose that gentle virgin from her place,
> And lookéd all about, if she might spy
> Her lovéd knight to move his manly pace,
> For she had great doubts of his safety,
> Since late she saw him fall before his enemy.
>
> "At last she saw where he upstarted brave
> Out of the well wherein he drenchéd lay;
> As eagle fresh out of the ocean wave,
> Where he hath left his plumes all hoary gray,
> And decked himself with feathers youthly gay,
> Like eyas-hawk up mounts into the skies,
> His newly budded pinions to assay,
> And marvels at himself still as he flies,
> So new, this new-born knight to battle new did rise."

The well into which the knight had fallen at the close

of the day before was the well of Life (the grace of God), and this water could cleanse, heal, and renew all things. So fresh was he, that the fiend doubted whether it were not another knight; and so strengthened was his arm, that with one blow he wounded the dragon's head, and made him yell with pain. The monster then tried to sting his foe, and in the combat the knight hewed off five joints of the dragon's tail. All day long the fierce struggle raged, and, when the Red Cross Knight was almost spent, his strength was again renewed by fruit from the Tree of Life. The second evening fell, and Una, uncertain of his safety, again spent the night in prayer for him. The next morning the dragon tried a new mode of attack; he rushed on the knight with his jaws wide open, intending to swallow him at once, when the knight, seizing the opportunity, ran his sword down the monster's throat, and killed him:

"So down he fell, as a huge rocky cliff,
Whose false foundation waves have washed away
With dreadful poise is from the main land rift,
And rolling down great Neptune doth dismay,
So down he fell, and like a heapéd mountain lay.

"The knight himself even trembled at his fall,
So huge and horrible a mass it seemed;
And his dear lady, that beheld it all,
Durst not approach for dread, which she misdeemed.
But yet at last, when as the direful fiend
She saw not stir, off shaking vain affright,
She nigher drew, and saw that joyous end,
Then God she praised, and thanked her faithful knight
That had achieved so great a conquest by His might."

Una's father and mother were now set free, and there were great rejoicings in the land. Then followed the betrothal of the Red Cross Knight and Una; but for a moment this was interrupted by the arrival of a messenger bringing letters to the king, declaring that the knight was

a false miscreant, who had forsaken his true lady Fidessa. The messenger turned out to be the old enchanter Archimago, still trying to separate Una and the Red Cross Knight; but he was now taken prisoner, and shut up in the deepest dungeon, and bound with iron chains. The knight abode some time with his bride; but he did not forget that there was still work to be done in the world, and that he was bound to the service of Gloriana, and must still fight the good fight against error and sin. And thus ends the first book of the "Faerie Queene"—

> "Now, strike your sails, ye jolly mariners,
> For we be come into a quiet road,
> Where we must land some of our passengers,
> And light this weary vessel of her load.
> Here she a while may make her safe abode,
> Till she repairéd have her tackles spent,
> And wants supplied. And then again abroad,
> On the long voyage whereto she is bent;
> Well may she speed, and fairly finish her intent."

CHAPTER VIII.

ELIZABETHAN LITERATURE—PLAYS AND PLAY-WRITERS (1564—1616).

THE reign of Queen Elizabeth is not only remarkable for the vigorous life of the older forms of literature, but also for the introduction and growth of forms new in England. The most powerful of these was the drama, or play.

The acting of stories and the assuming of different characters is one of the first amusements of childhood; and this natural fondness for imitating life had found expression in England long before the Elizabethan time. As early as the twelfth century, stories from the Bible and legends of saints were represented in the churches, and were called miracle plays. Latin was the language first used in these plays; but before long they were acted in English by the tradespeople of a town, and the stage was set up in the street, or in some public open place. Somewhat later the acting of allegories, or moralities, as they were called, became a very favourite entertainment. But both the miracle plays and the moralities were constructed on different principles from the Elizabethan play, and as forms of literature are quite distinct from it. The form of the Elizabethan play was taken from the ancient Greek and Latin plays, and the English drama owes its rise at this time to the revival of learning and the study of Greek and Latin plays at the universities. According to the Greeks, a play must be the story of some one action, which is to be worked out so as to show its

consequent results. In order to know what the necessary consequences of certain actions would be, a play-writer must discover and understand the laws which govern life; for if he were ignorant of these he might make the effects of an action quite different from what they would be in real life, and the whole play would be a blunder. When the action which forms the subject of a play is such that the necessary consequences of it must be disastrous, the play is called a tragedy; and when the action is such as must be followed by happy results, the play is called a comedy. The method of treating the subject, the characters in the play, and the style, would in the first case be serious and earnest, and in the second lively and hopeful. The greatest play-writers have been those who could take a story of life in which things seemed to go wrong, and show in the working of it out how all was in perfect obedience to the highest laws of life. Such a play-writer was the Greek Æschylus; and to this height Shakespeare attained. But there was this difference between them: the Greeks scarcely rose above the discovery of the laws governing life, which they called Destiny or Necessity; whereas Shakespeare saw that they were the laws of God our Father, by which all things work together for good, and he could therefore trust even beyond his sight.

After the revival of learning in Europe, Greek and Latin plays were not only studied at the universities, but were often acted on great occasions; and on the model of these, new Latin plays were sometimes written. The practice spread from the universities to the public schools; and on breaking-up days, a Latin play would be acted by the boys for the gratification, if not for the amusement, of the visitors. The first English play was written by a schoolmaster, Nicholas Udall. Between the years 1534 and 1541 he was head-master of Eton; and although it is not quite certain that the play was written for his boys to

act, yet there are many things which make it extremely probable; and, indeed, we can scarcely imagine why he should have written an English play at all, when there were no actors in England but students and school-boys, unless it had been for his own pupils; so Eton boys may not unfairly claim the honour for their school of having performed the first English play. It was a comedy called *Ralph Roister Doister.* The Greek comedies were pictures of Athenian manners and life at the time, and *Ralph Roister Doister* is a picture of London life and manners at that time. The action of the play is the story of a self-conceited, vain-glorious young man, and the result is consequent ridicule and loss of respect which he draws upon himself. There is plenty of fun in the play, such as boys would enter into; and the schoolmaster took the opportunity to give a merry lesson on the "minding of stops" in reading; for Dame Custance has some verses (which Ralph had written) read aloud to her, and the reader, by stopping at the end of every line, turns all Ralph's compliments into insulting remarks upon the lady.

In 1561 the first English tragedy was written by two members of the Inner Temple. Latin plays had been acted by the law-students of the Inns of Court, as well as by the students of the universities; and Sackville and Norton wrote together an English tragedy on the model of the tragedies of Seneca. It was called *Gorboduc.* The story was taken from Geoffrey of Monmouth's old Chronicle. The action of the play is the strife going on in the family of King Gorboduc; and the result of these divisions is very strongly shown in the ruin and misery of the kingdom. This is how the story is set forth by the two writers themselves—"Gorboduc, King of Britain, divided his realm in his lifetime between his sons Ferrex and Porrex. The sons fell to dissensions. The younger killed the elder. The mother, that more dearly loved the elder, for revenge killed the younger. The

people, moved by the cruelty of the act, rose up and killed both father and mother. The nobility, enraged at the rebellion of the people, most terribly destroyed the rebels; then afterwards fell to civil war among themselves as to the succession of the crown. In this war both they and their children were slain, and the land remained for a long time almost desolate, and miserably wasted."

One wonders how after this there could be any future history of Britain; but it was intended to put the evils of disunion very strongly forward, in order that all might understand and take the lesson to heart, for there was danger to England at the time Sackville and Norton wrote their tragedy from the strife of political and religious divisions in the country, and *Gorboduc* was a call to all Englishmen to unite as one nation around their queen, and support her government. It was with this purpose, perhaps, that the members of the Inner Temple chose to act for the first time an English tragedy, which all could understand, instead of a Latin play, at their Christmas festivities. A fortnight afterwards, by the command of Queen Elizabeth, they acted *Gorboduc* again at Whitehall, before the queen and her Court.

Now that plays began to be acted in English, the power of a good play and the pleasure which it gives were at once felt. Translations of Greek and Latin plays were made and acted, and clever young men at the universities followed Udall, Sackville, and Norton in writing English plays. These were still at first acted by the students of the universities and the Inns of Court, but soon great nobles had their servants or retainers taught to act; and in 1574 the Earl of Leicester obtained a patent for his servants, giving them permission to act within the city of London, or any other city at any time excepting "the time of common prayer or of great and common plague." But there was still no theatre, and the place usually chosen for the performance

was an inn yard, such as that described in the "Canterbury Pilgrims." The stage was put up on one side of the yard, and the audience stood either on the ground below, or was seated in the gallery which surrounded old inn yards, and on which the upper rooms opened. There was no scenery, and only such furniture was used as the inn itself could supply, such as a table and chairs, &c. The play began at three o'clock, and was over before sunset. In 1576 two theatres were built outside the city walls in the fields of Shoreditch. Here the citizens of London, sober earnest men, together with the young gallants of the Court, went on a holiday afternoon to see the last new play, and be stirred by it not only to laughter or tears, but to deeper thoughts about life and its consequences.

The demand for plays became quickly very great, and gave profitable employment to men of genius at the universities, who were at first the chief play-writers. Amongst the best of these were Lyly, Peele, Greene, Lodge, and Marlowe. As a dramatist Marlowe rose the highest. His first play was *Tamburlaine the Great*, in which he introduces the use of blank verse as the fitting measure for the most dignified or tragic scenes in a play. His next play, and his greatest, was *The Tragical History of Dr. Faustus*. Many stories were afloat about this Dr. Faustus, who was said to have been a German magician, living early in the sixteenth century. Melancthon and other reformers had written of him, and in 1587 a collection of the stories about him was printed in Germany, and versions of this book were published in English, French, and Dutch. The general representation of Faustus was of a man seeking knowledge to gratify his own pride, without regard to the service of God or good of man. In his eager pursuit of knowledge he employs the aid of evil spirits and sells his soul to Satan. Marlowe took this story and worked it into a powerful drama, in which the contest between good and evil, between temp-

tation and conscience, was set forth with the earnestness and energy of a man who believes all he writes. Marlowe wrote other plays, but, when a comparatively young man, was killed in a brawl on the 1st of June, 1593. Greene had died the year before, Peele shortly after, and Lodge and Lyly left off writing plays.

The stage was thus left clear for a greater play-writer than either of these, Shakespeare. When Marlowe died in 1593, Shakespeare was just beginning to write original plays. He is the greatest dramatist of that and all other time, and gives the crowning glory to the Elizabethan Literature.

In seeking to give a sketch of his life we are obliged to acknowledge that though much has been written about him, very little indeed is really known. His life for many years was the homely, obscure life of an Englishman of the lower middle-class; and although attempts have been made to add to the few known facts by suppositions, and to throw a colouring of romantic mystery over simple, bare details, yet we are not justified in giving currency to anything but established truth. In the case of smaller writers we may sometimes safely guess at the experience through which they have passed from their works, and even draw a correct picture of their characters, because such men do not create, but only repeat themselves and their own experiences. But the first essential of a great mind is its power of working independently of its own emotions and its own experience. It is by greater vigour of imagination and by clearer insight that it can conceive feelings and sensations belonging to varieties of character, under all possible circumstances, and not because it has itself passed through these phases. It was because Shakespeare possessed in such a remarkable degree this perfect independence of himself in his work that he was able to draw such a wonderful variety of characters, and to represent with unsurpassed correctness every shade of feeling under different circumstances, so that his plays are a mirror in

which all the world around him is reflected, but not himself. We cannot therefore say what were his private circumstances or his own state of mind at the time when he wrote particular works, excepting so far as we know these from records outside of himself. From an examination of such records we often find a striking contrast between Shakespeare's own mind and life, and the particular character and phase of life on which his imagination is working at the time. Thus, about the period when he was writing *Hamlet*, and was creating a character so overborne by the perplexities of life and its evils as to look on suicide as the only escape from them, Shakespeare, so far from representing his own state of mind at the time, was investing money at Stratford, and preparing for spending his later years there in comfort and happiness.

William Shakespeare was born in 1564, probably on the 23rd of April, St. George's Day. He was the eldest living child of John Shakespeare, a maker of the rough kind of gloves used in country work. The house in which John Shakespeare lived at the time his son was born may still be seen in Henley Street, Stratford-on-Avon. Soon after William Shakespeare's birth his father seems to have rented a small farm, where he kept some sheep, and added to his income by the sale of wool and mutton. It is probable that William Shakespeare was sent to the Free Grammar School at Stratford, and that it was there he learned English, some Latin, and a little Greek.

The year after Shakespeare was born the first English comedy, *Ralph Roister Doister*, was published, and the next year, 1566, the first tragedy, *Gorboduc*, appeared. We have seen how the taste for plays spread rapidly in England at this time, and even a small town like Stratford engaged companies of players to perform in the Guildhall for the pleasure of the townspeople.

There are sums of money mentioned several times in the town records of Stratford as paid to "the Earl of Leicester's

players," and to "my Lord Warwick's players," for performing in the town-hall. During some of the years in which these records occur, Shakespeare's father was alderman of Stratford, and he would have to help entertain the players and make arrangements for the acting. His son would thus be brought as a lad into contact with the players, and some of the servants of Leicester and Warwick were Warwickshire men, and perhaps known to the Shakespeares. From them he would hear of the London theatres, and of the demand for good players and plays.

When William Shakespeare was about fourteen his father lost money. It was just the time when he naturally would be thinking of apprenticing his son to learn some trade, and no doubt this want of means for setting young Shakespeare to some definite work, and the falling off of the business, caused the lad to lead a somewhat idle life during the next few years. In 1582, before William Shakespeare was nineteen, he married. His wife's name was Anne Hathaway; she was the daughter of a farmer living at Shottery, a village near Stratford, and was about seven years older than her husband. For four or five years after their marriage they lived in Stratford, and these were years of constant struggle between increasing expense and increasing poverty. Shakespeare's father was sinking deeper and deeper into debt and difficulty, and his son had no definite means of gaining a livelihood for himself and family. He had now three children to provide for, the two youngest being twins. Perhaps in his boyish days he had had the wish to go to London and become a player, and now, in the urgent need of doing something, the idea again suggested itself to him. He had friends among Lord Warwick's and the Earl of Leicester's players who might perhaps be able to find employment for him in the theatres. At all events one thing seems clear, and that is that Shakespeare became a player, not as mere

idle amusement, but with the honest intention of providing in this way support for his family and help for his father. Little as we know of his life in London, we do know that it must have been steadily industrious and frugal, and possibly the reason why we hear so little of him from the other writers of the time is that he kept himself out of the reckless, social dissipation in which many of them lived, and was thus but little known out of his work.

He did not take his wife and children with him to London; for London was then a most unwholesome place for children, and during a part of every year the theatres were closed, when he could be with them at Stratford. His object in going to London was to get money for them, and when he had made enough, to return and live again with his family and friends around him in his old home. He went to London, therefore, to work, and like all true workers, he began with what ever came to hand, proving his superiority, not by asserting it, but by doing thoroughly well whatever he could get to do. For some time his principal occupations were acting inferior parts at the Blackfriars Theatre, and altering old plays to suit the players or the audience. A man of his genius may well have thought that this was not the kind of employment for him; but Shakespeare worked steadily at it for five or six years, and it was soon found that his alterations were better than the piece; and then came the time for his original plays. Shakespeare was both a great genius and a true artist, and his art instinct early taught him that any good art-work must have one clear conception, around which all the parts gather, and to which every one is really essential. Thus we shall find in Shakespeare's plays a single truth, forming as it were the soul of the play, while every part of the play is as necessary to its true expression as the different parts of our body are to the welfare of the whole. His earliest

original plays were comedies; but even in these we see the truthfulness of his work, and something of the earnestness of purpose, which give such greatness to his later plays. One of his first comedies was *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*. This is a story of two friends, one of whom is false and infirm of purpose, but the honesty and truth of those around him bring him at last to repentance and a sense of duty. It is a working out in life of the eternal truth that evil is overcome by good. *Love's Labour's Lost*, another early comedy, is an earnest but good-humoured laugh at the tendency of that time to insist so much on the outside form of literature, the ornamental phrases and rare words, while the inward thought and substance were in danger of being lost; and the play illustrates how a mere striving after art is not in itself a noble life, but is only Love's labour lost, for true beauty of life can only find expression in noble and loving action. The charming fairy play, *Midsummer Night's Dream*, is also one of Shakespeare's early comedies. In it he shows the wonderful power of imagination, how it colours the feelings in regard to persons and things, how it can throw a tender grace over all the insignificant duties of life—typified by the little work of the fairies—"hanging dewdrops in the cowslips," "killing cankers in the musk-rose buds;" while without it, the drama of the clowns, containing all the supposed elements of poetry—love, moonlight, tragic death—is prosaic and dull, and stirs no feeling of sympathy. The days when Shakespeare was writing plays in London were days of intense national life and of great national danger. The Spanish Armada had threatened the very existence of England as a nation, and there was constant danger from the plots and conspiracies aiming at the life of Queen Elizabeth, on whom depended the maintenance of freedom of thought and progress. Shakespeare entered earnestly into the anxiety felt by every true man for the

welfare of his country; and in his own way and through his own work did his part in keeping up that spirit of patriotism and unity on which the safety of the nation rested in this time of danger. He wrote a number of historical plays, dealing with times of difficulty or of glory to the English nation; and through these the necessity of union in the present crisis was shown, and the spirit of patriotism was roused. We can fancy the effect produced on an Elizabethan audience of this period, with Babington's conspiracy* and the Spanish Armada† fresh in their minds as recent events, when they listened to the brave words of Henry V.‡ at Agincourt, so full of trust in English courage and steadfastness, and of faith in God; or heard Faulconbridge in *King John* § declare :—

> "This England never did, nor never shall
> Lie at the proud foot of a conqueror,
> But when it first did help to wound itself.
> Come the three corners of the world in arms,
> And we shall shock them; nought shall make us rue,
> If England to herself do rest but true."

We have seen all through Elizabeth's time how she gathered to herself, as to a focus, the devotion and patriotism of her people, and that she was to them the very personification of all that was most highly esteemed at that time; but a patriotism which centred so much in enthusiastic devotion to an individual had not in it the elements of enduring strength. Queen Elizabeth grew old, and there was no settled heir to the throne to keep alive the feeling of attachment to it. Then arose discord and strife of parties, while at the same time there was decay of the higher tone in social life. Family ties were held lightly, partly perhaps from the encouragement the queen had

* 1586. † 1588. Dispersion of the Second Armada, 1597.
‡ Fairly certain date, 1599. § 1595.

given to a chivalric admiration, rather than to the true love which holds fast through sorrow and joy in the sweet duties of family life, such as Chaucer loved to sing of in his poems. There was especially a lawlessness of life among many of the dramatists and other writers of the time: Marlowe was killed in a drunken brawl, and Greene ended his life in the bitter consciousness that he had made shipwreck of it, and could only with tender pity cry to others to take warning from himself:—

> "Oh that a year were granted me to live,
> And for that year my former wits restored!
> What rules of life, what counsel would I give,
> How should my sin with sorrow be deplored!
> But I must die of every man abhorred;
> Time loosely spent will not again be won,
> My time is loosely spent and I undone."

All these things stirred the calm, deep nature of Shakespeare to intense earnestness. Many of his tragedies illustrate the evils of discord in a state, as in *Julius Cæsar;* or the terrible catastrophes that follow the setting aside of the love and the duties that are the bonds of family life, as in *King Lear;* or the wide circle of misery into which one lawless crime draws the innocent as well as the guilty, as in *Hamlet.* Even his comedies have serious lessons of life underlying the bright story, as in the *Merchant of Venice*, where he teaches that whoever would choose the true life must give and hazard all he has in order to win the high ideal, and shows that harmony, like that of heaven, can only be made on earth when each man is as true as "the smallest orb" to God's laws.

While Shakespeare's clear insight and wonderful imagination enabled him to put such pictures of life upon the stage, he was working steadily onwards himself towards what he always seems to have held to be the reward of his labour—the gathering of his family around him in a pleasant home

at Stratford. Whatever we do not know about Shakespeare's life in London, there is one thing at least which is quite certain, and that is that he was making money and keeping it. To do this in the midst of the wild recklessness of the circle around him proves plainly that Shakespeare's own life was governed by law and self-restraint, that he was strong enough and brave enough not to drift into the disorders of the time. Another thing we plainly see is his own faithfulness to family ties and old friendships. He helped his father and supported his family, and bought with his literary earnings a house at Stratford called New Place, making purchases from time to time of land around it and in other parts of the parish. There is uncertainty as to the exact year in which Shakespeare gave up his life in London and settled with his family in New Place. He was no longer dependent on his literary work; for the money he had prudently saved and invested brought him in some income. But he did not give up writing plays; and in these later plays there has been noticed a most settled calm faith that God rules the world and does all things well, and a still firmer grasp of the conviction that evil is only overcome by good. He shows hatred and discord healed by constant patient love, falseness conquered by steadfast truth, and low suspicion banished by quiet continuance in well-doing.

We may imagine many pleasant pictures of Shakespeare's life at Stratford. We can fancy him taking country walks through the old scenes of his boyhood, showing his grandchildren "the bank whereon the wild thyme blows, where oxlips and the nodding violet grows;" pointing their eyes to the lark singing at heaven's gate, and telling stories of all his adventures in these woods and fields when he was a boy. And we can fancy him, with cheerful, hearty hospitality, gathering his family and old friends and neighbours around him at Christmastide in New Place, making merry

little speeches to them all, and surprising the country folk with tales of London and his experience of life there. But of these years only three actual records now remain: one is of the resistance Shakespeare made to the enclosing of some common lands near Stratford which had been of advantage to the poor; another tells us of his having a Puritan minister preaching at New Place; and the third is the record of his death, which took place on the 23rd of April, 1616, the day of the month generally supposed to have been his birthday. It was no doubt his own desire to lie after death in the little church where he had been baptised as a baby, where he had been married, where his father, mother, brother, sister, and his little boy lay buried, and where his wife and children might be laid near him; and this wish to be buried in Stratford Church, rather than to be placed with pomp and ceremony in Westminster Abbey, accords well with the whole spirit of Shakespeare's life and works; for in these we always find that the simple true love of kindred and real friends is held of far higher value than the glitter of fame. With those who had known and loved him his memory would never die; but other dramatists might soon arise before whose fame his own would be forgotten. It is supposed that he himself wrote the lines placed upon his tomb; if he did not do so, they were written at any rate by some one who knew his strong desire, as it is Shakespeare himself who is made to say—

> "Good frend, for Jesus' sake forbeare
> To digg the dust enclosed heare:
> Blest be the man that spares these stones,
> And curst be he that moves my bones."

A play of Shakespeare's is so full and many-sided that we may read it at different times in our lives and in different moods, again and again, and still find it as fresh as ever. There is always the bright, charming story, fasci-

nating to a child; there is the true picture of life, full of interest to all healthy minds at all times; there is the fine delineation of character and the sound expression of feeling through which we learn to understand better both ourselves and others; there is the genial spirit of love and the lesson of moral truth to guide us in action, the philosophic thought which helps us to understand why things are as they are, the clear sight which sees with hope the end to which things are working, and above all the faith in God which strengthens our own. And on the surface of the play lie the neat little sayings in which great truths are so compactly wrapped that we can use them as household words, while in the text itself the grammarian and student of language find a field in which they may work again and again.

It will be impossible, therefore, to give any idea of a play of Shakespeare's by merely telling the story, yet the stories are in themselves so beautiful and full of interest, that though they are only as it were the outside dress of the play, they are charming as pictures, and delightful to dwell upon in the imagination. We will therefore take one of Shakespeare's plays and just show his manner of treating a story, and it shall be one the story of which was created, as far as we know, by Shakespeare's own powerful fancy. The play of *The Tempest* opens with a violent storm at sea, in which a ship is seen in extremest danger. On board the ship are Alonzo, King of Naples; Ferdinand, his son; Sebastian, his brother; Antonio, Duke of Milan; Gonzalo, an old counsellor; and other lords and servants. They are returning from Tunis, where they have been to the marriage of the king's daughter Claribel. The ship is drifting towards the shores of an unknown island. Presently it strikes upon the rock and breaks to pieces. This tempest, which gives its name to the play, is not an ordinary storm; it is the hinge, as it were, on which the whole play turns,

and is necessary to the inner truth of it. We have seen how Shakespeare delighted to show the way in which right overcomes wrong, and that even in this world evil is not triumphant, but good. He does not make the evil itself the subject of his dramatic art, but he begins the action of his play at the point where, after some wrong has been done in the past, the good begins to work and the wrong is set right; and it is this final subjection of evil to good which he takes as that portion in the whole series of events most worthy to be dramatised and placed in detail on the stage before the eyes of men.

The purpose of the tempest is to bring together a number of persons who have been concerned in a great wrong which has been done twelve years before the play begins, and by their meeting together on this island, the wrong is to be at length set right; it is at this point, therefore, that Shakespeare begins to work his drama. The storm has been raised by spirits under the command of a magician, Prospero, who with his daughter, Miranda, and a monster, Caliban, are the only inhabitants of the enchanted island.

In the next scene we are told of what happened twelve years before, as Prospero is relating it to his daughter. She hears for the first time that her father was once Duke of Milan, but being wholly devoted to study, he neglected the duties of his position and left the management of his dukedom, to Antonio his brother. Whilst Prospero was shut out from the world in which his work lay, and absorbed in his favourite studies, his brother made an agreement with the King of Naples that he would become his vassal and pay him tribute, if he would help him to take possession of the Duchy and get rid of Prospero. The king sent an army to Milan, and at midnight Antonio opened the city gates to the soldiers. Prospero was seized and placed with his little child, then only two years old, upon a rotten old ship which

was driven out to sea. Through the pity of Gonzalo, one of the Neapolitan nobles, Prospero's books and clothes were put into the ship. Prospero had sought leisure to indulge his love of study without regard to his duty in the world as Duke of Milan; now, on this island, he could gratify his own tastes without interruption. There were no duties to call him from his books. Caliban, a monster whom he found there, was his slave, and did all the menial work; and there were spirits on the enchanted island, whom he had learned to command, and they were ready to do his bidding at a word. But it is not all of life to exercise the intellect: there are relations to our fellow-men which cannot be shunned; and Prospero found this out upon his desert island, and now would restore himself to his lost place in the world, and heal the wrong done to him by his brother and the King of Naples.

Among the spirits on the island is one called Ariel. He is a bright, gay little spirit, whose ideal of life is to live merrily among the blossoms in perpetual summer. He can make music, poetry, and songs as readily as heavier beings think and speak. He can "come with a thought," ride on the clouds, fly with the wind, but he knows nothing of the joys and sorrows of life which arise out of its human relationships. He is of the air, with all the pure sweetness and swift energy of the summer breezes or the autumn wind, and like it, touching the surface for a moment and passing quickly on. Caliban, the monster, on the contrary, is of the earth earthly; all the finer elements are wanting in him. He takes a drunken butler for a god: he is incapable of any service but slavery, has no perception of honour or loyalty, and is too lazy to enjoy work either as duty or activity.

Ariel, who has power over the winds, has raised the storm by which the ship is cast upon the island; and the first step in healing the old wrongs, and overcoming the

evil by good, is the bringing together of Ferdinand, son of the King of Naples, and Miranda, Prospero's daughter. This is done by Ariel. He first gets Ferdinand separated from the rest of the passengers and crew, and then he makes himself invisible, and flies before him in the air, singing—

"Come unto these yellow sands,
And then take hands:
Courtsied when you have, and kissed
(The wild waves whist),
Foot it featly here and there;
And, sweet sprites, the burthen bear."

Ferdinand follows the magic song, and Ariel leads him towards Prospero's cave. As he approaches it, Ariel sings—

"Full fathom five thy father lies;
Of his bones are coral made;
Those are pearls that were his eyes.
Nothing of him that doth fade,
But doth suffer a sea-change
Into something rich and strange.
Sea-nymphs hourly ring his knell,
Hark! I hear them—Ding-dong, bell."

The thought of his father calls up sorrow into Ferdinand's face; and just at that moment Miranda lifts her eyes and sees him. She is touched at once by pity for him; and the pure love which springs up in the two young hearts is the beginning of that higher feeling which at last joins all the discordant elements into sweet harmony.

Prospero sees that the charm will work; but first he tests the love of Ferdinand for Miranda by sacrifice, humility, labour, and obedience. He refuses to believe he is the young prince. He treats him as an imposter, and sets him to do Caliban's work of carrying heavy logs of wood, and piling them up before the cave before the sun sets. Ferdinand has never done any work before, but he forgets he is a prince, and toils cheerfully to accomplish the task Miranda's father

has set him, for his love for her makes the labour light and pleasant, and he bears patiently Prospero's hard words.

In the meantime the rest of the passengers in the ship are dispersed in two groups over the island. These two groups represent the world in which Prospero is now seeking again to live and do his work. And it is not an ideal world, in which it is delightful to live and in which there is nothing to do, but it is the world as Shakespeare saw it around him, and in which he strove to do his work. The first group represents the courtly world of the day, with its ambition, its selfish plotting, its bitterness and satire; the second stands for the lower side of life, with its stupidity, coarseness, and drunkenness. The first group consists of the King of Naples; Sebastian, his brother; Antonio, brother of Prospero, and usurping Duke of Milan; Gonzalo, and other courtiers. As they wander through the island, and the king is mourning for Ferdinand as dead, a plot is laid by the king's brother Sebastian, and Antonio, Duke of Milan, to kill the king while he is asleep. Sebastian is then to be made King of Naples, and Antonio is to hold his dukedom free from tribute to the king. But as the king and Gonzalo sleep, and Antonio has drawn his sword ready to kill them, Ariel wakes them with a song. In the midst of thunder and lightning, Ariel, in the shape of a harpy, sets before "the three men of sin" the wrong which has been done to Prospero. The thought of their misdeeds presses so heavily upon them, that they are driven to the verge of madness, and their deep repentance is the second step towards the overcoming of evil by good. The other group is composed of Stephano, the king's butler; Trinculo, his jester; and Caliban. In their coarseness and ignorance for them, too, self-interest is the principle of life. The height of their ambition is to possess the barren, desolate island, in which the drunken butler is to be king; but it is ambition still. They plot to kill Prospero, and take the island for

themselves. Ariel defeats the conspiracy, by playing in the air upon a tabor and pipe, and leading Stephano, Trinculo, and Caliban into a stagnant pool.

Ariel then tells Prospero of all that he has done, and Prospero sends him to bring the king and his party to his cave, where he receives them in his old dress as Duke of Milan. A reconciliation between the brothers takes place, and Antonio restores the dukedom to Prospero. The king asks his pardon for the part he took in his banishment, and Prospero brings him to his son, whom he mourned as lost in the shipwreck; and it is arranged that Ferdinand shall marry Miranda. The three men are released by Ariel from their mud bath in the stagnant pool, and the sailors from their sleep under the hatches of the ship. It is found that the ship has been put into complete order again, and is ready for sea.

Prospero releases Ariel from the spell which binds the spirit to his service, and asks him to call up fair breezes for their homeward voyage to Italy. Prospero now abjures his magic, breaks his magic wand, and resolves to drown his book of charms in the depths of the sea. Henceforth he will live as Duke of Milan, holding his true relation to his fellow-men, and ruling wisely for their good.

Thus Shakespeare shows the final triumph of good after many years of apparently successful wrong. The charm of the play itself, its bright fancy, and deep thought, it is impossible to give in any sketch of it. It is supposed to have been Shakespeare's last.

We have taken Shakespeare as representing the highest dramatist of the Elizabethan time, but there were some among his contemporaries who must not be forgotten. The chief of these is Ben Jonson. His father was a Puritan preacher; but he knew more of his step-father, a bricklayer, whom his mother married when Ben Jonson was only two years old. He had a good education in Westminster School,

provided for him by Camden, the historian. Then he served in the war in the Netherlands, which was being carried on against the tyranny of Philip II. On his return to London he joined the players. Like Shakespeare, he acted and altered plays, until he found his own power as a dramatist. One of his first plays was a comedy, *Every Man in his Humour*, first acted in 1596. Jonson was a man with a strong sense of what was right, and had an honest hatred of every kind of folly or affectation. This is powerfully shown in his three next plays, which were satires: *Every Man out of his Humour* was directed against the follies of London life; *Cynthia's Revels* exposed the affectations of Elizabeth's Court; and *The Poetaster* dealt with the false aims and tricks of Art in Literature. In 1603 he produced a tragedy, *Sejanus;* and in James I.'s reign he wrote other comedies and some masques.

In all his work Ben Jonson strove with manliness and courage to lead men to live for more serious aims, and to give the earnestness and labour bestowed on surface trifles to deeper things. He endeavoured constantly to make them more true to an independent standard of perfection, and to free them from the slavish subjection to the custom and fashion of the hour. He thus expresses what he desires to do for men in his work—

> "That these vain joys, in which their wills consume
> Such powers of wit and soul as are of force
> To raise their beings to eternity,
> May be converted on works fitting men;
> And, for the practice of a forcéd look,
> An antic gesture, or a fustian phrase,
> Study the native frame of a true heart,
> An inward comeliness of bounty, knowledge,
> And spirit, that may conform them actually
> To God's high figures, which they have in power."

Ben Jonson's honesty and scorn for everything false and base held him steadfast to his own purposes and standard,

in the times of the Stuarts, when the stage became degraded to the lower tone of the Court of James I., and not falling in with the current of the day, the old dramatist, who had begun his work in Elizabeth's time, sank into neglect. He died in 1637, and was buried in Westminster Abbey. A friend of his commissioned a mason to carve on the stone above his grave the words, "O rare Ben Jonson," which still remain as his most fitting epitaph, in its simple honesty and freedom from the flattering phrases he would have so much disliked and despised.

CHAPTER IX.

ELIZABETHAN LITERATURE—STORIES

(1558—1603).

HUMAN life under every variety of circumstances must be always full of interest. If we hear the story of a life very like our own we are delighted to find that others have had to do and feel and bear just what we have, and we gain hope and courage from their example; and if the life should be one altogether apart from our own we then enjoy the new picture it gives us, and by the help of imagination we realise and enter into the new experience, and gain a wider power of sympathy. It is easy to see that the stories of real men and women would not be nearly enough to satisfy the keen interest we feel in our fellow-creatures, and imagination has to set to work, therefore, to invent stories in order to supply the constant demand. Thus the old stories of Charlemagne, Roland, and other actual heroes were eagerly read, and then the cry arose for more and more stories of the same kind, so imagination was set to work to invent chivalric romances. The age of chivalry had now passed away, and yet the love for stories was as strong as ever; but a taste had arisen for stories of other forms of life than the chivalric, and a new kind of story now began to be written describing the life of the later time. These were called novels.

One of the most popular and famous novels of the Elizabethan time was "Euphues," written by a young man named John Lyly. The purpose of this story was to show

the bad influence which the social life in Italy had upon the young Englishmen who travelled there. We have seen how, at the time of the revival of learning, earnest scholars like Colet, Linacre, and Grocyn had gone to Italy to learn Greek; but after Greek was taught in the schools and universities in England, it was still the custom to send young men to Italy as a kind of finish to their education. They went with no fixed purpose of study beyond gaining acquaintance with the Italian literature of the day. They mixed in the society of the little courts in Italy, where literature was regarded as intended only for the pleasure of a small circle, and was written in courtly language and turned from its higher purposes into a frivolous amusement. Roger Ascham, Queen Elizabeth's tutor, had already pointed out in his "Schoolmaster" (a book on Education) the selfishness and corruption of Italian society, and the utter indifference of the Italians to religion; and he had shown the injury it was to a young Englishman to be thrown unguarded amongst those who lived only for their own pleasure, and scoffed at God and man.

Roger Ascham had used the word Euphues, taking it from Plato, to express a scholar who possessed a readiness to receive impressions through the perfect organisation and healthy condition of all his senses. Lyly took up Ascham's opinion in regard to the influence of Italian life on young Englishmen, and he made this the object of his story, while he chose Euphues for the name of his hero. The name was Greek, and for this reason, perhaps, he began his story by representing Euphues as a young gentleman of Athens. As soon as his education is ended at home, he is sent to visit Italy, according to the fashion of the day. He comes to Naples, "a place of more pleasure than profit, and yet of more profit than piety—a court more meet for an Atheist than one of Athens." In Naples Euphues meets with an old gentleman named Eubulus, who gives him

several pages of good advice, ending with, "Serve God, love God, fear God, and God will so bless thee as either heart can wish or thy friends desire." All this good counsel was of course intended by Lyly for his readers as a warning. Euphues, however, does not profit by it, but goes into the idle pleasures of Italian life in company with a young friend named Philantus. His experience now serves to add weight to the warnings of Eubulus, and impresses the lesson still more strongly on the readers. Euphues, "a sadder and a wiser man," returns to Athens; then follow letters written by Euphues to his friends full of earnest thought on various important matters of life, as the education and training of the young, the avoidance of foolish fashions, the study of the Bible, the spread of Italian infidelity. The aim of the letters is to show the way to an honourable and righteous life, complete in the healthful development of all the faculties of man's soul and mind and body, and consecrated to the service of God.

"Euphues" became one of the most popular books of the day; it was read and talked over by the ladies and gentlemen of Queen Elizabeth's Court, and was held as a kind of text-book of good counsel on a variety of subjects. But this could not have happened if it had not been that the spirit of the book was so much in accordance with the age, and also that its outward form or style corresponded so completely with the prevailing taste. The use of the Italian style, as the outward dress of literature, has been already mentioned as one of the features of the Elizabethan literature. The constant intercourse with Italy, and the general study of Italian literature, had created a fancy for the fashion of playing upon words, and for alliteration, or choosing words beginning with the same letter. Other tricks of this style were the contrasting or balancing of one thing against another, and the comparison of every object with something else. Two or three sentences from one of

the letters of Euphues will illustrate this. It is a letter supposed to be written to Eubulus on the death of his daughter: "If I were as able to *p*ersuade thee to *p*atience as thou wert desirous to exhort me to *p*iety, or as wise to comfort thee in thine *age*, as thou to instruct me in my *youth*, thou shouldst now with less grief endure thy late loss, and with little care lead thy aged life. Thou *weepest* for the death of thy *daughter*, and I *laugh* at the folly of the *father*, for greater vanity is there in the *m*ind of the *m*ourner, than bitterness in the *d*eath of the *d*eceased. She was young and might have *lived*, but she was mortal and must have *died*. Wise men have found that by *learning* which old men should know by *experience*, that in *life* there is nothing *sweet*, and in *death* nothing *sour*. Not he that hath *g*rayest hairs, but he that hath *g*reatest *g*oodness liveth longest. Thou shouldst not weep that she hath run *fast*, but that thou hast gone so *slow*." Deep sympathy could scarcely express itself with so much ingenuity; and the attempt in writing to pick out words for the sake of their sound, or initial letter, checked the natural expression of real feeling.

The great popularity of Euphues gave the name of Euphuism to this particular style of writing, and it is still known by this name in English literature.

It became fashionable at Court, and no one who wished to be thought a fine gentleman or lady could make the commonest remark in simple language. The suggestion had to be balanced by a contrasting thought, some far-fetched comparison must be sought for, and words chosen to accord with one another in sound or spelling. Although this introduced a great deal of artificial effort into conversation, yet it called forth a certain surface brightness, which Shakespeare has represented in some of his characters; he has also ridiculed the attempts to imitate Euphuism by dull or untutored persons.

The first part of "Euphues" was published in 1579;

the next year Lyly added a second part, called "Euphues and his England." This gave an account of a visit paid by Euphues and his friend Philantus to England. They land at Dover, and travel to Canterbury. Here they stay awhile at the house of a retired courtier, who gives them the benefit of his experience of life. They then pass on to London, and enter into the English life of the time. The second part of "Euphues" has the same earnest spirit in it, and the faults and follies of English society are pointed out, not for the sake of the satire, but for the purpose of reform.

There were other writers, who supplied the new demand for stories, besides Lyly; amongst these were the dramatists Lodge and Greene. The latter wrote many short stories or novels, taken from Italian tales. There was less earnestness of purpose in Greene's novels than in Lyly's, and his own life was sad and ill-governed. He desired at last to save others from making shipwreck of life as he had done, and wrote just before his death a story which he called "A Groat's Worth of Wit Bought with a Million of Repentance." He gave his own name, Robert, to the hero, and told some parts of his own life; seeking to warn others of the evils into which he himself had fallen.

CHAPTER X.

ELIZABETHAN LITERATURE—RELIGION.

RICHARD HOOKER (1558—1600).

THE joy which hailed the accession of Queen Elizabeth rose out of the strong religious feeling of the time. It was not only because the persecutions of Mary's reign were over that the English people were filled with gladness at the idea of having a Protestant sovereign on the throne; but they hoped that the English Church, which had been forced back into Romanism, and had persecuted its children, would now be purified, and become again the Church of the English people. This settlement of what was to be for the future the creed and ritual of the English Church was one of the most difficult and important questions of the reign.

There was on the one side a large body of Romanists in the Church, who desired no reform at all. On the other side there were a number of Protestants, who during the persecution had taken refuge in Geneva, and who wished the whole framework of the Church to be taken down and re-modelled, according to the Swiss or Presbyterian form of government. Between these two parties was a third, who looking on the Church as the Church of the English people, and not of one sect or party in the nation, desired to have it settled on a basis wide enough to include the largest possible number of the nation. In accordance with this view, a Commission was appointed by the queen in the first year of her reign, to prepare a book of services such as might be used by

persons who, while agreeing on many points, differed on others; and it was hoped that such a Liturgy might be accepted as the "Common" (or general) "Prayer Book" of the whole nation. On this Commission were men belonging to the different religious parties of the time; and at the head was Archbishop Parker, a man sincerely in earnest in his endeavour to make the Church thoroughly national. When the Book of Common Prayer was completed, an Act of Uniformity was passed obliging every clergyman to use this book in the public services of the Church. A second Book of Homilies, or sermons, was also compiled, and this, in addition to the Book of Homilies published in Edward VI.'s reign, was ordered to be read in churches, so as to prevent clergymen of different parties from giving expression to their own private opinions in the pulpit. But although the design was to promote peace and unity in the Church, there was so much activity of thought among the people on religious subjects that discussions respecting the new order of things soon began to arise. The first opposition came from those who disliked the changes made, and desired to return to the alliance with Rome. They regarded the Church as a newly-founded system, the product of the later times of the Reformation. The chief writer in defence of the Church from attacks on this side is Archbishop Parker. He wrote to show that a new Church had not been established, but that the Church in England was, and ever had been, since the earliest times of British history, the Church of the nation, giving expression to the religion of the nation, and holding itself independent of Rome. And now, in purifying itself from the errors and corruptions which had crept in from the Romish Church, it was only returning to its original faith and practice.

Jewel, Bishop of Salisbury, took up the same line of defence, and in his "Apology for the Church of England" goes back to the times of the early Christians, and shows

how the errors and corruptions, from which the English Church had now been purified, had no place in the earliest times, but were an after-growth of human invention and origin.

Both Parker and Jewel addressed themselves to that party which was opposed to the Reformation, because at the beginning of Queen Elizabeth's reign the chief attacks upon the Church were from this side; but as time passed on, many of the elder generation, who were attached to the old forms, passed away, and the more violent among the Romanists withdrew from the English Church, and were busied with plots against the queen, rather than with controversy. Meantime there was a growing desire to see further reforms carried out within the Church. Those who had consented to the retaining of certain old practices in the Church, for the sake of the older generation who were attached to them, felt now that this reason had less weight; while the plots of Philip of Spain, the persecutions in the Netherlands, and the massacres of St. Bartholomew's Day in Paris, aroused a hatred among the English people to everything associated with the Church of Rome. The queen, however, had made up her mind that the settlement of the Church already agreed to in the earlier years of her reign should not be disturbed. She compelled the more strict enforcing of the Act of Uniformity; and congregations of Puritans began to be formed outside of the Church.

Archbishop Parker, who had defended the Church against the attacks of the Romanist party, had died, and was followed by Grindal, who was himself in favour of reform and of the free preaching of the clergy; but on his death in 1583, John Whitgift was made archbishop. He was ready to second the queen in her determination to allow no changes to be made in the Church, and to bring the force of the law to bear against those who objected to the form of government and service appointed for the Church at the

beginning of Elizabeth's reign. The later controversy of this time lay between the upholders of the Church as already established, and the Puritans, who desired to make further changes. Many of these held the opinion that nothing should be admitted into the government or ritual of a Christian Church which is not mentioned in the New Testament, or in the very early times of Christianity; and such persons now turned against the English Church the very arguments from the example of the early Church which Parker and Jewel had used in its defence. Another line of defence was therefore required to meet these attacks.

Meantime persecution called forth violence and bitter feeling. Thomas Cartwright, who was Professor of Divinity at Cambridge while Spenser was there, had denounced with violence the whole system by which the Church was governed, and had been replied to by Whitgift, who claimed an authority for the Church over the people in matters of religion almost equal to the demands of the Romish Church. Then a new element, which can scarcely be called religious, was brought into the controversy. A series of tracts now appeared, written by different writers, but all published under the name of "Martin Mar-prelate." They were printed in secret, and the writers were anonymous. Grotesque titles were chosen, such as attracted attention, and there was in all of them a strain of satire and rough humour which caused them to be largely read. These tracts were replied to in the same vein by the wits and dramatists of the time. Of this part of the controversy Lord Bacon no doubt expressed what many felt on both sides when he wrote: "It is more than time that there were an end and surcease made of this immodest and deformed manner of writing lately entertained, whereby matters of religion are handled in the style of the stage."

Another result of the claims made for the Church by its supporters was that the Puritans gave up hope of further

reform, and began to form small congregations of their own, where they could carry out their religious convictions. There began also to rise about this time a body of persons called at first Brownists, but afterwards Independents. Like the Presbyterians, they held that nothing should be admitted into the rule or service of a church which was not distinctly mentioned in the New Testament. They saw the difficulties of the union of the whole nation in one Church, and maintained that each congregation should be independent of every other, and should be at liberty to choose for itself whatever order of service and teaching of doctrine it judged to be most agreeable to the Word of God. They also held that the over-rule of bishops, and of a presbytery (or meeting of the clergy), were contrary to Scripture; but they allowed the authority in religious matters of a majority of the persons composing the congregation.

Although Whitgift had ably defended the Church against the attacks of Cartwright, it was felt that there was still needed some more complete justification of the whole system of the English Church, and especially an intelligent explanation of the ground on which those things rested for which there were no express directions in the New Testament. From the first the Reformers had all held the Word of God as the highest authority; and it seemed to many good and earnest men as if the English Church had departed from this principle when certain laws and practices were retained in it, of which there was no mention in the New Testament. It was in the use of this argument that the greatest strength of the Puritans lay; and it was to meet this that Richard Hooker entered the field as a combatant.

Richard Hooker was a true hero, and may well stand as the best and highest representative of those engaged in the battle for the English Church. He was a man of great learning, far-sighted, and wide-minded, caring more for the general good and order of the Church than for the triumph

of particular opinions; and so perfect was he in love, that in the heat of controversy he felt no contempt for his opponents, and spoke no evil of them. He saw that they all belonged to the same great army, and were equally in earnest in trying to understand and carry out their Lord's commands.

Like many of the heroes of Queen Elizabeth's reign, Richard Hooker was a Devonshire man. He was born at Heavitree, near Exeter, about the year 1553. When Queen Elizabeth came to the throne in 1558, he was a little boy five years old. His father and mother had already begun to notice his quick intelligence; and they were struck, too, with the singularly sweet, calm disposition of their little boy, and with his loving obedience to all their wishes. He had early teaching from his mother in the stories and truths of the Bible, and training in all good habits. At school he got on so well that when the time came when his parents thought of apprenticing him to some trade, his schoolmaster begged he might go on teaching him without any other reward than the pleasure of training a pupil who, he believed, would be able in later years to do good service for God in the world.

There was at that time a Mr. John Hooker, who was an uncle of Richard's, a man of some means, and Chamberlain of the City of Exeter; and some years before, it happened that Bishop Jewel, himself a Devonshire man, had been sent to Exeter on a mission to the Churches there, and during this visit he had made the acquaintance of Mr. John Hooker. When, therefore, the good schoolmaster had taught Richard Hooker all he could, he persuaded Mr. John Hooker to undertake to send his nephew to the university for one year, believing he would soon get known there, and be helped forward in some way to the conclusion of his college education. Mr. John Hooker now remembered his acquaintance with Jewel, and he took

a journey to Salisbury to see the bishop, and have a talk with him about his clever nephew. At this visit it was settled that at Easter the schoolmaster, whose name is not known, was to bring Richard Hooker to Salisbury, that the bishop might judge whether the young Hooker was really such a remarkable lad as his uncle believed him to be. So in the spring days at Easter, the schoolmaster and his pupil set forth, probably on foot, to travel from Exeter to Salisbury. We can fancy the anxiety of the father and mother and the good uncle, as they bid the boy good-bye, and what hopes and fears would fill the hearts of the two travellers on their way at the thought of how the young scholar would acquit himself before the learned Bishop Jewel, and whether he would be able to do credit to his master's teaching and his uncle's good opinion. But Richard Hooker had no doubt already learnt something of that steadfast trust in God which enabled him in after-life to believe that all things are working together for good; and he knew that many a prayer would be offered for him at home, for his mother was said to be like Monica, the mother of St. Augustine, in her constant prayers for her son.

The bishop was so much pleased with the learning and intelligence of Hooker, and with the boy's appearance and behaviour, that he promised to provide for his going to Oxford; and he also made the schoolmaster a present. Soon after Richard Hooker's entrance at Corpus Christi College, Oxford, he fell ill of a dangerous sickness which lasted for two months, during which time his mother most earnestly begged his life of God; and after his recovery, he would often say that he could only pray "that he might never occasion any sorrow to so good a mother, and that he loved her so dearly that he would endeavour to be good, as much for her sake as for his own." As soon as he was strong enough he walked from Oxford to Exeter to see his mother, stopping on his way at Salisbury, where he dined

with Bishop Jewel. On leaving, the bishop brought to him a staff, and said to him, "Richard, I do not give but lend you this, my horse; be sure you be honest and bring it back to me at your return this way to Oxford. And I do now give you ten groats to bear your charges to Exeter; and here is ten groats more, which I charge you to deliver to your mother, and tell her I send my blessing with it, and beg her prayers for me. And if you bring my horse back to me, I will give you ten groats more to carry you on foot to the college; and so God bless you, good Richard."

Richard brought the bishop's staff back, and again stopped at Salisbury on his return to Oxford, but this was the last time he ever saw his kind friend and helper, for a short time after the news was brought to Oxford that Bishop Jewel was dead. It was a great sorrow to Hooker to lose his good friend, and the sorrow for his loss was added to by the fear that he would no longer be able to stay at the university. This fear, however, was soon set at rest; for Dr. Cole, the head of the college, at once told him to go cheerfully to his studies, and he would take care he wanted for nothing. A few months later the means of providing for his own support at college was offered to him in a way which shows the high esteem in which he was held, both for character and learning. Edwin Sandys, Archbishop of York, had heard of Richard Hooker from Bishop Jewel, and being now about to send his son for the first time to Oxford, he determined to place him under the care of Hooker, though there was not much difference in their ages. "For," said the Archbishop, "I will have a tutor for my son that shall teach him learning by instruction and virtue by example, and my greatest care shall be of the last; and, God willing, this Richard Hooker shall be the man into whose hands I will commit my Edwin." About the same time Hooker was asked to take another pupil, George Cranmer, great-nephew of Archbishop Cranmer. The

young tutor was only eighteen, and his pupils a year or two younger, and there soon grew up a most pleasant friendship between them; "a friendship," says Izaak Walton, "made up of religious principles which increased daily by a similitude of inclinations to the same recreations and studies; a friendship begun in youth, and in a university, free from self-ends. And in this sweet, this blessed, this spiritual amity, they went on for many years; and, as the holy Prophet saith, so 'they took sweet counsel together, and walked to the house of God as friends,' by which means they improved this friendship to such a degree of holy amity as bordered upon heaven; a friendship so sacred, that when it ended in this world it began in the next, where it shall have no end."

As soon as Edwin Sandys and George Cranmer had finished their college course, they left Oxford to travel on the Continent, which was considered necessary for a young gentleman of that time. Meanwhile Hooker continued to study and perfect himself in all kinds of learning, and many other pupils were sent to him. He took his M.A. degree, and was made Fellow of his College; he was also appointed Hebrew lecturer. About the year 1581 he was ordained priest, and soon after was requested to preach at St. Paul's Cross. These public preachings have been described in the account of Latimer; and in Queen Elizabeth's reign any celebrated man was sent for to preach there, the queen herself often going in state to hear the sermons. As the preachers frequently came from a distance, there was a house appointed where they might lodge while in London. It was called the Shunamite's house, from the story of the Shunamite woman who made the little room for Elisha. A good man, who had failed in business, was appointed to live in the house with his wife, and entertain the preachers.

Hooker rode up to London on horseback, in pouring

rain; and being unused to riding, and wet through, he felt so ill when he reached the Shunamite's house that he thought it impossible he should be able to preach on the Sunday. It was Thursday evening when he arrived, and for the next two days Mrs. Churchman, the wife of the man who kept the house, nursed him and doctored him so successfully that on Sunday he was quite well, and preached the sermon at St. Paul's Cross. He was very grateful to good Mrs. Churchman, and ready to listen to any advice she might give him; and seeing how much her care had done for him, he readily believed her when she told him that he ought to have a wife to nurse him and make his life more comfortable. Hooker probably objected, that he did not know any one whom he could ask to be his wife; for when Mrs. Churchman proposed that she should find one for him, he readily agreed to it, and left the matter in her hands.

About a year afterwards, Mrs. Churchman informed him that she had found a wife for him, and he went up to London to be married. The wife proved to be Mrs. Churchman's own daughter Joan; and Hooker, trusting Mrs. Churchman's choice, married her. He wanted a wife to nurse him and make him comfortable; and Mrs. Hooker seems to have been a busy, energetic woman. But he had not, perhaps, considered that times of illness are rare compared with the times of health and ordinary life, and that the bustle and activity of a woman who had no sympathy with his pursuits would be rather disturbing to his calm student life. She was a thoroughly practical woman, and perhaps true to a certain narrow sense of duty; but she had a violent and overbearing temper, and there were no doubt many things which made Hooker's married life a time of daily little trials. But Hooker was not a man to be overcome by these; he saw the hand of God in all the events of life, and he felt, perhaps, that there was a needful discipline in those things which drew him away from his favourite pursuits, and

obliged him to take thought and care for affairs which concern the life of others. And we shall see how true was Hooker's faith in the working of greater good out of what seems evil; for had it not been for the trials of his married life he might never have undertaken his great work, because the circumstances which called it forth arose out of the concern of his two old pupils at the "thorny wilderness" in which they found him.

Hooker on his marriage had given up his college fellowship, and had been appointed to the living of Drayton-Beauchamp, in Buckinghamshire. He had been here about a year, when Edwin Sandys and George Cranmer came to see their old tutor. Izaak Walton gives the following account of their visit:—"They found him with a book in his hand—it was the 'Odes of Horace'—he being then like humble and innocent Abel, tending his small allotment of sheep in a common field; which he told his pupils he was forced to do then, for that his servant had gone home to dine, and assist his wife to do some necessary household business. But when his servant returned and released him, then his two pupils attended him into his house, where their best entertainment was his quiet company; which was presently denied them, for Richard was called to rock the cradle; and the rest of their welcome was so like this, that they stayed but till next morning, which was time enough to discover and pity their tutor's condition; and they having in that time rejoiced in the remembrance, and then paraphrased on many of the innocent recreations of their younger days; and thereby given him as much present comfort as they were able, they were forced to leave him to the company of his wife Joan, and seek themselves a quieter lodging for next night. But at their parting from him Mr. Cranmer said, 'Good tutor, I am sorry your lot is fallen in no better ground, as to your parsonage; and more sorry that your wife proves not a more comfortable

companion, after you have wearied yourself in your studies!' To whom the good man replied, 'My dear George, if the saints have usually a double share in the miseries of this life, I, that am none, ought not to repine at what my wise Creator hath appointed me; but labour, as indeed I do daily, to submit my will to His, and possess my soul in patience and peace.'"

Perhaps the looking after his sheep with a book in his hand, and still more the rocking of his baby's cradle, did not appear such great hardships to Hooker as they seemed to the young men; but, at any rate, Mr. Sandys was so persuaded of "his tutor's sad condition," that he induced his father, the Archbishop of York, to use his interest in getting Hooker appointed Master of the Temple. It was with much reluctance that Hooker left his quiet country parish and went up to London. His own wish was to live "where he might see God's blessings spring out of the earth, and be free from noise," but he had work to do in the active world of life; he must do battle in the noise and heat of the combat for that portion of Truth granted to him; and he was too true a hero to shrink from duty because it was distasteful to him. So he came up to London in the year 1585, just at the time when the later controversies of Queen Elizabeth's reign were going on in the Church. Whitgift and Cartwright had made peace with one another, and the Mar-Prelate controversy had scarcely begun; but there was much contention over disputed points, and the Puritan party was gaining strength among the people. The chief weapon of the Puritans lay in their assertion of the absolute authority of Scripture in matters of outward form and Church government, as well as in matters of faith; for this argument laid hold of many of the most faithful and conscientious Christians, who desired to obey the will of God in everything, and who had never perceived that Reason and Nature are

also of God. The principle, too, seemed to many persons to be the same as that contended for by the earlier Reformers, who maintained against the corruptions of doctrine in the Romish Church, that the Bible alone could be the authority for matters of faith, because being beyond our sight we could only know them by a revelation from God.

When Hooker began to preach at the Temple, there was at the same time a Mr. Walter Travers, a friend of Cartwright, who was Evening Lecturer at the Temple Church. He was a true-hearted, earnest man, with whom Hooker had much sympathy; but they differed so much in regard to the ceremonies and order of government in the Church that their sermons were often in direct contradiction to one another. This, of course, produced division in the congregation, which consisted chiefly of the Benchers of the Inn and the students, and the disputes in the pulpit were carried on continually in the hall of the Inn. At length the Archbishop, wishing to put a stop to this, prohibited Mr. Travers from preaching at the Temple; and an appeal was made by Mr. Travers and his friends to the Privy Council, but the queen upheld the Archbishop, so that the appeal was dismissed. Hooker was then accused by Mr. Travers and his supporters of saying things in his sermons which they thought were contrary to Scripture; and also that he prayed before and not after his sermons, kneeled when he prayed, and at the Communion, with other matters so unimportant, that Hooker said that "but to name them I should have thought a greater fault than to commit them." Hooker defended himself against these accusations in a reply "full of so much quiet learning and humility," that it at once gained him the friendship of the Archbishop. Through all Hooker's writings he never in the heat of argument loses his respect and love for any honest truth-loving opponent; and so strong was his belief in the goodness and earnestness

of Mr. Travers and those who thought with him, that he with careful study examined his own opinions again, in order to satisfy himself that he was right in holding them. It was during this thoughtful reconsideration of his own views about Church government that the idea of his great work, "Ecclesiastical Polity," first occurred to him. He did not wish to attack any who differed from him, but he thought he might satisfy conscientious, faithful men, by the same reasoning which he had found sufficient for himself, that they could, with a clear conscience, accept the system of the English Church.

In order to carry out this design with that completeness which Hooker desired, it was necessary that he should have more time and less interruptions; he therefore gave up the office of Master of the Temple, and took a small living at Boscombe, a little Wiltshire village near Salisbury. He lived here for four years, giving his best thought and careful work to his book; and at the end of that time four out of the eight books, into which he proposed to divide his work, were finished, and these wer published in 1594.

In 1595 Queen Elizabeth, who had a great esteem for Hooker, gave him the living of Bishopsbourne, a village about three miles from Canterbury. Here Hooker was often visited by persons who had read his books on Ecclesiastical Polity; and he also found a friend, like-minded with himself, with whom he formed a warm and intimate friendship. This was Dr. Saravia, a Prebend of Canterbury. Of their friendship Izaak Walton says:—"In this year 1595, and in this place of Bourne, these two excellent persons began a holy friendship, increasing daily to so high and mutual affections that their two wills seemed to be but one and the same; and their designs both for the glory of God and peace of the Church, still assisting and improving each other's virtues and the desired comforts of a peaceable piety." Hooker's two old pupils, Edwin Sandys and George Cranmer still main-

tained their steadfast love for their master; they came to see him, and were ready to render him every service in their power.

At Bishopsbourne, Hooker worked hard at his great book, but all his thoughts were not absorbed in this: he gave himself also to the work of his parish. He was diligent in preaching and catechising his people, always ready to visit those who were sick or in distress, most anxious to prevent quarrels among them, "urging his parishioners and neighbours to bear with each other's infirmities, to think no evil, but to live in love, because, as St. John says, 'He that lives in love, lives in God, for God is love.'" He liked to keep up the old custom of the whole parish, rich and poor, young and old, going in procession round the boundaries of the parish on a certain day every year, because it brought them all together in friendly relation; and at these times he always entered heartily into the spirit of the village festival, and had some merry, loving words for every one, especially for the boys and young people, to whom the occasion was a holiday full of fun. Like Chaucer's poor parson,

> "Christes lore and his Apostles twelve
> He taught, but first he followed it himselve;"

for his biographer says: "He seemed in this place to teach God's precepts, as Enoch did, by walking with God in all holiness and humility, making each day a step towards a blessed eternity."

About five years after Hooker came to Bishopsbourne, in 1600, he took a severe cold in going from London to Gravesend by water. This brought on an illness, from which he never recovered; he was able, however, to work on at his book for some time, and he often said to Dr. Saravia, who came every day to see him, "that he did not beg a long life of God for any other reason but to live to finish his three remaining books of 'Ecclesiastical Polity,' and then—

'Lord, let Thy servant depart in peace.'" And so he worked on, struggling with increasing weakness, until he had finished the last book; then his work was over, and he laid down his pen, leaving to others the task of revising and arranging what he had written, but dying like a soldier on the battle-field. Just before his death he said to Dr. Saravia, "Good doctor, God hath heard my daily petitions, for I am at peace with all men, and He is at peace with me; and from that blessed assurance I feel that inward joy which this world can neither give nor take from me; my conscience beareth me this witness, and this witness makes the thoughts of death joyful. I could wish to do the Church more service; but I cannot hope it, for my days are passed as a shadow that returns not."

It is only possible to give a slight sketch of the plan of Hooker's great work in defence of the English Church. The object of it was, as we have seen, not to attack those who were separating themselves from the Church, but to show them, if possible, how they might with a clear conscience remain in communion with it.

Hooker saw that he and his opponents were one in heart; and in the preface to his work he declares his belief that the Puritans were quite as honest as the Churchmen in holding firmly to what seemed to them to be the truth. He knew that what made the Puritans ready to do and to bear anything, in order that they might worship God and order their churches according to a different form, was their firm persuasion that their form was most agreeable to the Word of God, and that the Bible alone was the sole authority for the polity of the Church. Hooker saw that a tender regard for the laws of God made them shrink from adopting any custom or rules not mentioned in the New Testament; he therefore took for the subject of his first book "Laws in General," and in this book he shows that all laws have their source in God and are of Him; that the

laws of nature are God's laws as much as are the directions revealed to us in the Bible; and so also are those laws planned by man's reason, for the reason of man is the creation and gift of God. It is important to notice how Hooker thus recognises the laws of nature and of reason as of God, for in this lay the strength of his argument. He then goes on to show that laws are nothing in themselves, excepting so long as they answer their true design, and this he declares to be to enable a man to do his duty without hindrance, and fulfil the will of God. For this reason it is necessary for the good to band together and make laws, so that the bad should be kept in check; though in so doing the good have to give up some of their freedom, and place themselves under rule. In making laws they must use their own sense and reason, and they may, at any time, change or alter these if need occur; or take back the authority given to the rulers. Hooker thus makes the laws by which men are governed to spring from man's reason, used for the highest purpose, and he places the source of authority in the governed, to whom rulers are responsible. It is important to notice this, as we shall find this idea of civil law and rule brought forward again in England.

The title of Hooker's second book was "Of the use of Divine Law contained in Scripture, whether that be the only Law which ought to serve for our Direction in all things without exception." Hooker distinguishes between what he calls eternal laws, such as those relating to our duty to God and to man, which is always and in all places the same; and laws relating to customs and forms, which are not suitable for all times and all places. Thus the Jewish laws of ceremonies, though given by God, were changed afterwards. He says: "Laws that were made for men or societies, or churches, in regard of their being such, as they do not always continue, but may, perhaps, be clean otherwise a while after, so may require to be otherwise ordered

than before." The way was thus prepared for the third book, which treated of "Laws concerning Ecclesiastical Polity; whether the form thereof be in Scripture so set down that no addition or change is lawful?" Hooker contended that this was not so, that at different times and in different countries laws might be made best suited for the Church at that time, and of that nation. The fourth and fifth books defended the system of Church government and the order of service arranged for the English Church at the time of the accession of Queen Elizabeth. The sixth book examined into the plan followed in the Geneva Church, of placing power in the hands of the members of the congregation. The seventh defended the rule of bishops; and the eighth the supreme authority of the sovereign as the head of a national Church. Hooker's "Ecclesiastical Polity" has a place in English literature apart from the purpose which he intended it to serve, on account of its clear penetration of thought and sound good sense, as well as of the singular fitness in the illustrations employed. The style is grave, earnest, and eloquent, and in the five books which were first published, and which he revised himself, there is the most careful finish in the expression.

CHAPTER XI.

FRANCIS BACON (1561—1626).

Up to this time the story of our English Literature has been the story of writers who have striven to set before us the true ideal, and in this way to waken in us a greater love for God, and a more earnest striving to make our lives complete in duty. This we have seen is the soul of the poems, stories, plays, and other writings, ever since the very early times; but while men thought earnestly and felt deeply about the things belonging to God and to human life, very few persons had tried to find out anything about the great world of Nature around them. We see, it is true, that our forefathers had from the earliest times a simple, hearty love for nature; they saw its beauty, and it spoke to them, as it does to men now, and always will do, many great and precious truths. Thus the daisy represented to Chaucer the perfect beauty of the highest type of womanhood, in its purity, sweetness, and serviceableness; but no one had then thought of asking how the life came into the little seed which grew up into the daisy plant, nor how it got its nourishment out of the earth, the air, and the sunshine. Nor had any one found out how wonderfully it was made, and how its roots, its leaves, its little golden head, and pure white crown were all parts of the most exquisite and perfect arrangement, in order that the little daisy might live its life without care and do its true work.

Whilst men could see and love the beauty of form and colour in nature, and feel a certain sympathy with it, the

love was overbalanced by a larger amount of fear—that fear which we feel respecting anything unknown, and especially in the presence of power, when we know nothing of the laws which govern and direct it. This fear was also increased by the false idea which prevailed of the character of God. During the corrupt times of the Romish Church the people had been taught to think of God, their Father, as an angry tyrant ready to destroy; and they had come to look upon Nature, not as a manifestation of Divine wisdom and love, so much as a mysterious agency for punishing and tormenting man. So great was the prevailing dread of Nature during the Middle Ages, that if any one were suspected of trying to find out its laws and processes, he was looked upon with horror, as a man who had cast off the fear of God, and was probably in alliance with evil spirits.

This came to be the common belief about Roger Bacon, a Franciscan friar, who in the thirteenth century had the courage to lift the veil, as it were, from Nature, and who, amidst the greatest difficulties and constant opposition, devoted his life to trying to understand something of the world around him. But for the most part all students were content to take what the Greeks taught about Nature, without making any observations or experiments of their own, in order to prove the truth of what they learned, or to find out anything more. No advance could of course be made in this way, and the stock of knowledge could never be increased; but the old facts and blunders were learned and repeated generation after generation.

This was the state of Natural Science down to the sixteenth century; then a change began to take place in regard to the feelings with which men looked upon Nature, and the little stock of knowledge they possessed of its works and laws.

After the revival of learning the keen spirit of inquiry began to be turned to the facts taught about Nature in the

old books, and the truth of some of them was questioned. Then came the Reformation, when the good news was spread abroad that God loved the world, and had given His Son that men might not perish, but have everlasting life.

This better knowledge of God gave men courage in seeking to know His works, and love cast out the old fear of Nature and its processes. The world was now prepared to receive the teaching of a new philosopher, who was to show men how they must enter the kingdom of Nature humbly and patiently, learning by careful observation and experiment to understand its wonders, and to use its powers for the help and comfort of mankind.

This philosopher was Francis Bacon. He was the son of Queen Elizabeth's Lord Keeper, and was born at York House, in the Strand, on the 22nd of January, 1561. As a boy he was grave and studious, so much so that Queen Elizabeth used to call him her "little Lord Keeper," and she often liked to puzzle him with questions. At twelve years old he went to Trinity College, Cambridge. A great part of the training at the universities consisted at that time of the teaching of logic according to Aristotle's method. Under this system the time of the students was taken up in defending, by a process of reasoning, certain propositions and definitions; but Bacon saw that while they were learning how to make these assertions appear true, they were taking no real means of ascertaining their truth. He felt that the system did not teach them how to distinguish the true from the false, nor could they in its practice gain any new knowledge. He left college, therefore, persuaded that some new plan of study was needed by which men might be trained to find out by real tests what was true, rather than to defend what might be false. This idea laid strong hold of Bacon, and became the starting-point of his philosophy.

On leaving college, Bacon went to France for two years. When he returned, in 1579, his father was dead, and it was

necessary for him to earn a living in some more profitable way than by maturing his idea of how to gain new knowledge. He entered Gray's Inn, and in 1582 was called to the Bar. He found time, however, to set forth the first sketch of his idea in a Latin tract. He obtained a seat in Parliament, and took part in the Mar-prelate controversy, of which we have already spoken; but Bacon's position in relation to these disputes was that of moderator, and not of partisan.

Meantime Bacon worked at his profession, and made attempts, through the interest of the Earl of Essex with the queen, to get appointed Attorney-General; but the post was given to Sir Edward Coke. He also tried to gain in marriage a rich young widow, Lady Hatton, but here again Sir Edward Coke was his successful rival.

We must keep in mind that throughout his life Bacon's great desire was to devote his time to the working out of his scheme of philosophy—that he looked upon the law, and everything else by which money could be made, as second to this great object. He had dreams of a day to come, when he might have gained money enough to retire to Cambridge, with two or three students like-minded with himself, and there study Nature, and teach others how to learn its secrets. This was the one hope and prayer of his life, and he looked to it so strongly as the highest good that he became at last blinded to the means by which he sought to bring it about. His mind dwelt constantly on the perfecting of his system of philosophy, and on how he should be able to give it to the world; and yet, having no private property, he had to make money by a profession which he looked down upon as an insignificant employment compared with the service he desired to render to the world by his philosophy. This low view of his work separated it from all his nobler aspirations and convictions, so that he did not bring his conscience to bear upon it; and

the question of what was right or wrong in relation to it seems scarcely to have entered his mind.

While living in a world in which false principles were at work, he seems to have thought that in the world he must use the means others did for self-advancement and gaining money. He lived a kind of double life as a philosopher and a lawyer. As a philosopher he was full of noble aspirations; as a lawyer he was dishonest. As a philosopher he longed to serve mankind, and to help in removing many of the ills of human life; as a lawyer he regarded his friends too much as aids to his own advancement, and felt no remorse in forsaking them when it suited his purpose.

It was not till after the death of Elizabeth that Bacon obtained any great advancement. In the reign of James I. he was knighted, was made Solicitor-General, then Attorney-General, and finally Lord Chancellor, with the title first of Lord Verulam, and afterwards of Viscount St. Albans.

The separation in Bacon's life of principles of integrity from the every-day world in which he dwelt, and the common work of it, caused his fall. It was discovered that in his office as Lord Chancellor he was enriching himself by taking bribes from those persons who appealed to him for justice. He was charged with this crime before Parliament, and at once acknowledged it. Then he was sentenced to pay a fine of £40,000, to be imprisoned in the Tower, to be deprived of all his offices, and to be declared incapable of ever holding any appointment again. The only thing he attempted to say in his defence shows how he had acted on the false principle, that in the world one must do as the world does—"I was the justest judge that was in England these fifty years; but it was the justest censure in Parliament that was these two hundred years."

The king ordered Bacon's immediate release from the Tower; and he spent the rest of his life in study and writing. Five years afterwards, on the 9th of April, he died.

During the reign of Elizabeth, Bacon published a little book, which he called "Essays, or Counsels Civil and Moral." He uses the word essay in the sense of a testing or weighing of things, so as to prove their real value. These essays were originally ten in number, but were afterwards increased to fifty-eight. They are careful studies of the due value of a number of things belonging to the mind of man and his life in this world—such as "Truth," "Adversity," "Studies," "Friendship," "Travel," "Expence," "Discourse," "Great Place," "Plantations," "Buildings," "Gardens," &c., &c. In these essays of the things of human character and life, Bacon was using the same principle of testing or trying the nature of things, as he was endeavouring to introduce for the purpose of enlarging the knowledge of Nature, and making it serviceable to man. Bacon's plan for teaching his system of philosophy was to write a series of works, all to be comprehended under the name of "Instauratio Magna," or the Great Building-up. There were to be six books:—(1) The Advancement of Learning; (2) The "Novum Organum," or the New Instrument for getting Knowledge; (3) "The Experimental History of Nature;" (4) The "Scala Intellectus," or the Arrangement of Experiment into Science; (5) The Anticipations of what Experiment may Teach; (6) "Active Science, or the Application of Science to the Uses of Man." The chief features in Bacon's philosophy were his more correct view of the relation of Nature to man; and his method for enlarging man's knowledge of Nature. The old fear of Nature, as the enemy of man, had given way in some measure before a better knowledge of God; but Bacon now distinctly taught that Nature is a kingdom, given by God to man, rich in treasures for his help and comfort. To enter the kingdom of Nature and subdue it, three things were necessary—first, obedience to its laws; second, to come to Nature as a child to be taught; third, to use experiment in order to find out and test assertions,

before receiving them as truth. This last Bacon called his new *organon*, or instrument, in distinction from the old *organon*, or instrument used by Aristotle for proving truth. Aristotle's system accepted certain general statements as facts, and without testing the truth of these, proceeded to draw conclusions from them. If the original propositions were always true, then the knowledge implied in them might be extended to particulars; but it must be first proved that the general statements were universally and at all times correct. Thus we may assert, as a general proposition, "all metals are solid;" then of any particular metal, such as iron, we may reason, "all metals are solid; iron is a metal, therefore iron is solid." Thus we seem to arrive by reasoning at the knowledge that iron is solid, though we may never have seen a piece of iron. Aristotle's method is called deduction, because from a general statement we deduce a particular conclusion.

But Bacon would say: there may be metals in the earth which are not solid; or there may be conditions under which metals, solid at one time, are liquid at another. Experiment must then be used, and different kinds of metals must be procured, and subjected to the test of different conditions. By experimenting on them in this way, we should arrive at the knowledge that at certain degrees of heat, all metals become liquid; and we might also discover that one metal—quicksilver—is liquid, even at a very moderate degree of heat. The knowledge of the effects of heat would be thus enlarged; and out of all the particular instances where we had tried its effects on metals, we make at last the general statement—at certain degrees of heat all metals become liquid. This process is called induction, because, from a number of particular cases, we are led to form a general statement. We must not suppose, however, that Bacon's method does away with Aristotle's. The mistake made before Bacon's time was that general state

ments were assumed, without being proved by experiment. As soon as a general statement has been formed by careful induction, reasoning can again take the place of experiment. Thus, when it is fully established as a general law that "at certain degrees of heat all metals become liquid," we need not in particular cases make use again of experiment; but we can use Aristotle's method, and say—"At certain degrees of heat all metals become liquid; iron is a metal, therefore at a certain degree of heat it will become liquid." Bacon also taught, that as soon as general laws had been established by careful induction, the next process was to discover by reasoning, or deduction, how they could be turned to account in useful inventions for the help and comfort of man.

Bacon's writings on Nature, and the right way of gaining a knowledge of it, roused many persons to a patient, careful study of the world around them. At first the strife of the civil war, and the intense interest of the political struggle for constitutional freedom, so engrossed men's minds, that they could scarcely feel the importance of anything else; but even in the midst of the conflict there were a few persons who began to study Nature on Bacon's method. They met together to compare the results of their experiments; and after the restoration of Charles II. they formed themselves into a society for the pursuit of science, which still exists as the Royal Society.

CHAPTER XII.

JAMES I. AND CHARLES I. (1603—1649).

As we pass from the age of Elizabeth to that of James I. we shall find that the conditions of the new time were in many respects less favourable to the growth of English Literature. But notwithstanding this, some of the old life was active and strong, and there were still many men who saw more clearly than others the true ideal, and who strove to express it in different forms—

> "Giving virtue a new birth,
> And a life that ne'er grows old."

And indeed some of these forms were higher than any literature, for they were practical efforts to raise human life and the world to the highest ideal, and thus to make reality of the noble dreams of the best men.

We have seen how the drama had been one of the chief glories of the Elizabethan literature. During the first half of James I.'s reign, Shakespeare was writing his best plays, and Ben Jonson was still at work; so also were other play-writers who had grown to manhood and had begun their work before Elizabeth's death. But even before these passed away the play-writers of the Stuart time began to lose sight of the high purpose which the Elizabethan dramatists had kept in view. There was a change also in the audience at the theatres. The Puritans looked on earthly life as opposed to spiritual, and this caused them to strongly object to the drama, which represents human

life more vividly than any other form of literature, and thus a number of truth-loving, right-minded persons of the middle class, who in Elizabeth's days made up a great part of the audience at the theatres, gave up going to plays. At Court, and among those who followed Court fashion, low views of life prevailed, and a corrupt taste had sprung up for stories of evil passions. It was for such an audience that the play-writers of the Stuart time wrote their plays. At the end of the reign of Charles I., when the Puritans were in power, the theatres were closed by Act of Parliament.

Religious controversy was still active, but there was less dispute respecting reforms in the Church. On James's accession he had called a conference of the clergy and the Puritans at Hampton Court, and the objections of the Puritans to the Book of Common Prayer were stated; but it was found that the alterations proposed by the Puritans affected the constitution of the Church itself, and nothing was done. From that time the hope of making the English Church what they wished was given up by the Puritans, and they began more and more to establish congregations outside of the National Church.

The controversies of James's reign are chiefly important on account of their having led to two other lines of work—the new translation of the Bible, and the study of history and antiquities. When James I. came to the throne, two translations of the Bible were in use—the Bishops' Bible and the Geneva Bible. The Bishops' Bible was a translation made in Elizabeth's reign under the direction of Archbishop Parker. The translators were fifteen learned men, most of whom were bishops. The Geneva Bible was a translation made by the English Protestants who took refuge at Geneva during the persecutions in Queen Mary's reign. At the Hampton Court Conference the clergy quoted the Bishops' Bible and the Puritans the Geneva, in support of their arguments, and the difference in the two trans-

lations often raised new disputes as to which was correct. It was thought that even if the idea of all the English people forming one outward Church must be given up, they might at least have one Bible, and that this would in fact be a means of drawing religious parties together, and giving union to their religious feelings and opinions. King James, therefore, appointed a commission, on which were forty-seven of the most eminent scholars of the time, both among the clergy and the Puritans, and these men worked for three years with earnest care in preparing the best translation of the Bible which could then be made. In 1611 it was published by royal command, and became the authorised version to be used by all English people. It is valuable not only for its correctness and fidelity to the original languages in which the Word of God was written, but also for its language and style, which is the pure, simple mother-tongue of the English people, altogether free from the faults and fashions of the literary style of that time, or of any time. Our English Bible has thus its own place in the story of our English Literature.

The religious and political controversies of the time led also to the study of history and antiquities, in order that the combatants might find support from the past. Thus Usher, in order to show that the English Church was originally independent of Rome, wrote with careful research "A Discourse on the Religion Anciently Professed by the Irish and British;" and this was followed by a larger work on the Antiquities of the British Church. Sir Walter Raleigh wrote in prison his "History of the World," as far as the second Macedonian War. Bishop Andrewes, in his controversy with Cardinal Bellarmin, had to produce arguments from Church history and the writings of the Fathers. John Selden was, however, perhaps one of the most intelligent students of the past. He was a lawyer of great learning and remarkable memory, and had a vast

store of information on many subjects; but he studied the past, not for the sake of finding arguments to support a party, so much as to gain from it all the light he could, in order wisely to understand the present. He saw more clearly than most men of the time how certain influences had been, and still were at work, and how they must produce certain results; he thus understood how seeming evil works out good, and how men must work with their times, or else their lives will be a useless striving for a vain purpose of their own. A man like Selden is almost sure to be misjudged by the parties of the day, and he fell under the displeasure of the king and the suspicions of the Puritans. He wrote in James's reign two books, one on "Titles of Honour," and the other on the "History of Tithes." In 1624 he entered Parliament, and used his vast legal learning and historical knowledge in defending the constitutional rights of the English people against the king's misuse of the royal power.

Poetry during James's reign suffered much from the influence of that particular style of writing called Euphuism. In Elizabeth's reign it had been but the outside form in which vigorous thought and bright imagination had been expressed, but later it became the great object of a writer to show skill in inventing curious fantastic phrases, and in using words that began or ended with the same sounds, whether they best expressed the idea or not. The sense was often thus made obscure, and real feeling, which always finds expression in simple natural words such as come most readily to the mind, was lost. As a great deal of poetry is the expression of feeling, sentiments were invented, or affected, for the purpose of being put into euphuistic verse, and the ideas became as fantastic and unnatural as the style. Many poems were written in fanciful shapes, such as altars, pillars, wings; and then each line had to be made the exact length to fit into its place. One

of the favourite writers of the time in this style was Dr. Donne. He was a true-hearted, earnest man, and there was much in his own life of real poetry, but he made verse for those who admired ingenious forms of expression more than they cared for the sense or feeling, and he put little of his own mind or heart into his work; he therefore chose subjects in which he had no real interest, and often affected sentiments that he did not feel. Some of his religious poetry is true to himself, but the artificial form of it prevents it from conveying the feeling in it to the souls of others.

As we pass from the reign of James I. into that of Charles, we soon find a growing earnestness of thought, and a deeper, stronger feeling, giving more vigour to the literature of the later time, until this rises to its height of glory in the writings of Milton. The reason of this renewal of life is to be found in the greater action of the time. Whenever wide interests are at stake, and important questions occupy the minds of the people more than the ordinary trifles of common life, there is greater elevation in the spirit of the literature. The best minds feel most the greater interests of the time, and are encouraged to the free utterance of their feeling by assurance of the hearty sympathy of the people, and the consciousness that they are not speaking of great themes to those too much absorbed in the lower interests of life to heed them.

There were questions of deepest interest stirring the minds of the English people during the reign of Charles I.; and in the intensity of devotion to these questions, the narrower aims of selfishness, and the love of ease and wealth, were lost sight of. We must see what these questions were, and how they found a voice in literature. Foremost of all was the question of religion. There were many of the best minds of the age who still clung to the fair ideal of one Church, in which the whole English nation should join, as

one people in worship and communion, and which should be the mother of new generations of believing, God-fearing Englishmen. And with this beautiful hope there had now grown up a deep love and reverence for the Church as already established, and so strong a conviction of its being the best and highest system of government and ritual that it seemed a profanation to object to any part of its services or rule. From this point of view it seemed right to use any means to silence objectors, and to compel, if possible, the whole nation to enter the Church; and to accomplish this, men were ready, not only to persecute but to suffer persecution, and lay down their own lives in devoted faithfulness for what they believed to be the Divine ideal of the Church.

Outside of the Church there were the Presbyterians and Independents, who, still holding fast to their principle that everything in Church government or ritual not mentioned in the New Testament, as having been practised by the Apostles, must be contrary to the will of God, sought to carry out their convictions in separate congregations of their own. In them, again, there was the utmost faithfulness to duty; for they firmly believed that the simple worship and freedom of their system were in accordance with the earliest directions of Christ and His Apostles; and for the sake of obedience to these, they endured with patience cruel oppression; they gave up English homes, and comfort and ease, for exile in the wilds of America; or fought and died on many a battle-field. Whilst questions as to the outside form and polity of the Church were thus calling men to give up much of the things belonging to this world, there was at the same time a more vivid realisation of the things belonging to the unseen world, which we receive by faith, and a more vigorous striving after the highest purity in character and life. This is seen in both the great religious parties of the time; and it appears not only in the literature, but in the strong-handed efforts of the Puritans to compel men

to enter into the kingdom of God, and acknowledge His supreme rule over the earth.

Closely connected with the religious questions were others of political interest, on which the future history and well-being of England depended. No one who loved his country—who had pride in her past, or hope for her future—could be indifferent to these. There were the questions of the authority and dignity of the sovereign; of the sacredness and inviolability of the constitution and laws of England; and of the liberty of all to be and do what they thought to be right and best. Each of these principles had its supporters, ready to maintain it at the cost of goods and life; and thus the devotion of the Royalists to the king, the steadfast faithfulness of the Parliamentarians to the constitution and laws, and the enthusiasm for liberty among the Independents, are all themes noble enough for poetry, and are fitly represented in the literature of the time.

We can only see how these thoughts and feelings find expression in a few of the writers of that day; and in taking representatives from each class or party, we cannot but notice again that literature is the exclusive possession of none. Every true cause has the essence of poetry in it, because it involves a principle which is greater than the narrow and sordid pursuits of a selfish, worldly life; and it therefore lifts men above these. Literature, then, cannot belong to any one party; and we shall see how at this time from the very party which was the least remarkable for taste or culture—the Puritans—rises the greatest poet, Milton.

The reign of Charles I. was a time of action and strong feeling, and much of the poetry of the day consists of lyrics, or short songs, giving voice to emotions called forth by the events of the time. We shall take these as representing the spirit of tender love to the Church, of loyal devotion to the king, of the old chivalric sentiment

or of the new patriotism. In Milton we shall find the complete poet rising to the highest essence and form of poetry, and representing also the religious and political ideas of Puritanism, as well as simple independence and love of truth.

We must begin the reign of Charles I. and the story of the lyric poets with George Herbert. He was the son of Sir Richard Herbert, of Montgomery, and belonged to the same family as the Earls of Pembroke. His mother was a woman of great sweetness and strength of character, and after her husband's death she devoted herself to the care of her seven sons. During the time of their residence at the university, she went to live in Oxford so as to be near them; and here her bright wit, good sense, and sweetness not only kept her sons around her, but gained for her many friends, amongst them Dr. Donne, who praised in verse her "autumnal beauty."

George Herbert was not at Oxford, but entered Cambridge with a scholarship from Westminster School. At seventeen he found that he had the gift of song, and like many of the young cavaliers of the day, could write a poem, set it to music, and sing it to his viol; but it is characteristic of the whole spirit of his life to his last hours, that in his New Year's letter written from college to his mother, he tells her he has made the resolution that his "abilities in poetry shall be all and ever consecrated to God's glory." He also early showed a reverend love for the Church, and defended it in verse against some satirical poems written on the Liturgy and government of the Church by a Scotch minister. He was made Public Orator of the university, and had some hopes of becoming Secretary of State, but on the death of one or two of his friends at Court, and shortly after of King James himself, George Herbert resolved to study Divinity and enter the Church. One of his Court friends endeavoured to persuade him to alter his resolution on the

ground that the priest's office was beneath Herbert's abilities and birth; to which he replied that "though the sacred name of priest has been made contemptible, yet I will labour to make it honourable, by consecrating all my learning and all my poor abilities to advance the glory of that God who gave them; knowing that I can never do too much for Him, that hath done so much for me as to make me a Christian. And I will labour to be like my Saviour, by making humility lovely in the eyes of all men, and by following the merciful and meek example of my dear Jesus."

Soon after taking deacon's orders, he married a Miss Jane Danvers, of Bainton, in Wiltshire, a lady fitted in every way to be his wife, and the wife of a parish priest. Three months after his marriage he had the living of Bemerton, near Salisbury, offered to him by the Earl of Pembroke. Herbert felt so strongly the solemn responsibility of entering on the charge of a parish that he took some time to consider whether he ought to accept this living. He was staying at the time at Bainton with his wife's relations, and here his old friend Mr. Woodnot sought him out, and brought him to Wilton, the old house of the Pembroke family, where Sir Philip Sidney had stayed with his sister Mary, and had written the "Arcadia." Here King Charles and his Court were now paying a visit to the Earl of Pembroke, and here Laud persuaded Herbert to become the rector of Bemerton. He had left Bainton in the gay dress of a cavalier with his sword by his side, but three days after he returned to his wife in the plain suit of a parish priest, and he said to her, "You are now a minister's wife and must not now claim a precedence of any of your parishioners, for you are to know that a priest's wife can challenge no precedence or place but that which she purchases by her obliging humility." His wife was so much of the same mind as himself, that she joyfully gave up the

society she had been used to, and entered upon her new life at Bemerton, where she claimed no position nor reverence for herself, but so completely won the respect and love of all, that Izaak Walton says "their love followed her in all places, as inseparable as shadows follow substances in sunshine." The first work of Herbert in his parish was to get the church repaired, then to rebuild the parsonage house and an ancient chapel that stood opposite to it.* He then wrote for himself some directions and rules, which were afterwards printed in a little book called the "Country Parson." He took great pains to give his people an intelligent understanding of the services and rubric of the Church and the reasons why they were appointed. Every morning and afternoon he read the daily service in the little chapel opposite his house, and here, not only his own household, but most of his parishioners, and many of the gentlemen in the neighbourhood used to come and join in the prayers; and often a farmer ploughing on the Downs, when he heard the little bell, would leave his work to go to prayers, and then come back saying he felt the better and the happier for the blessing of God which he brought back to his labour. In loving concern for the souls and bodies of his parishioners, Mr. Herbert and his wife were constant and unwearied. They never turned away from any in want, and spent a considerable part of their income on the parish.

George Herbert had, as we have seen, the gift of song; and, in the midst of his busy life in his parish, he often put into verse the thoughts and feelings which filled his mind. Then he would sing his verses to the accompaniment of his lute (as the cavaliers of the day sang their drinking-songs and love-poems); sometimes setting them to an old air, and sometimes making music to fit the verse. These poems were many of them on the Church: the different

* This little church is still standing, and daily service is still read in it. Herbert's body lies buried beneath the altar.

parts of it; its services and festivals. And through the whole of these there breathes that spirit of tender love and reverence for the Church, and that regard for its authority, of which we have already spoken. As illustrating this we need only take one poem—"The British Church."

"I joy, dear mother, when I view
Thy perfect lineaments and hue
Both sweet and bright:
Beauty in thee takes up her place,
And dates her letters from thy face,
When she doth write.

"A fine aspect, in fit array,
Neither too mean, nor yet too gay,
Shows who is best;
Outlandish looks may not compare;
For all they either painted are,
Or else undrest.

* * * * *

"But, dearest mother, (what those miss)
The mean thy praise and glory is,
And long may be.
Blessed be God, whose love it was
To double-moat thee with His grace,
And none but thee."

Many of Herbert's poems seem to have sprung up in his mind in the form of a holy thought or feeling, called forth by the sight of some object of nature. Thus we can fancy the bright spring morning, when the old red roses were all in bloom in the parsonage garden, and the air was sweet with the scent of the stocks and wall-flowers, how the thought would rise in Herbert's mind that soon all this sweetness and glory would be gone; but then comes the reflection immediately that all good and fair things do not thus quickly pass away, like the spring and its roses—the best, the noblest, are steadfast and enduring; and Herbert takes up his viol, and tunes its strings, and sings:—

"Sweet day, so cool, so calm, so bright,
The bridal of earth and sky,
The dew shall weep thy fall to night;
For thou must die.

"Sweet rose, whose hue angry and brave,
Bids the rash gazer wipe his eye,
Thy root is ever in its grave,
And thou must die.

"Sweet spring, full of sweet days and roses,
A box where sweets compacted lie,
My music shows ye have your closes,
And all must die.

"Only a sweet and virtuous soul,
Like seasoned timber, never gives,
But tho' the whole world turn to a coal,
Then chiefly lives."

Herbert had great enjoyment in music, and twice a week he walked into Salisbury to attend the cathedral service; he also allowed himself the recreation of joining a musical society there for the practice of concerted music and madrigals, for he used to say, "Religion does not banish mirth, but only moderates and sets rules to it." Perhaps it was in walking to or from this music practice that he heard the little birds singing in the lanes, and sang himself:—

"Hark how the birds do sing,
And woods do ring;
All creatures have their joy, and man hath his.
Yet, if we rightly measure,
Man's joy and pleasure
Rather hereafter, than in present, is.

"To this life things of sense
Make their pretence;
In the other angels have a right by birth.
Man ties them both alone
And makes them one,
With the one hand touching heaven, with the other earth.

"In soul he mounts and flies,
In flesh he dies;
He wears a stuff, whose thread is coarse and round,
But trimmed with curious lace,
And should take place
After the trimming, not the stuff and ground.

"Not that he may not here
Taste of the cheer;
But as birds drink, and straight lift up their head;
So must he sip and think
Of better drink,
He may attain to, after he is dead."

George Herbert spent three years of calm and beautiful life at Bemerton, striving to do the work of God in his parish, and faithful in loving obedience to every rule and ordinance of the Church. His home was in all respects a happy one; his wife gave him sympathy and help in his work, and they had the cheerful influence of young life around them, in three nieces, who had lost their father and mother, and who loved and honoured Mr. and Mrs. Herbert as second parents. Bemerton is only a mile and a half from Salisbury, and is near Wilton House; so that though Herbert lived only the quiet life of a "country parson," he was not without society, and the influence of his pure and high example was felt in a wider circle of friends and kinsfolk. During the latter part of these three years Herbert's poems show a consciousness of a decline in health and strength. He was consumptive, and as the disease gained ground he felt that he must die; but his mind was so much in tune with Heaven, so full of love to God, and of humble, but confident trust in Christ, that a short life on earth seemed no loss to him. The last verse of his little poem on Life fitly describes his own fragrant influence, and also shows his feeling about death. It seems to have been suggested

by the withering of some flowers which he had gathered in a morning walk, and carried in his hand:—

"I made a posy, while the day ran by.
Here will I smell my remnant out and tie
My life within this band.
But Time did beckon to the flowers, and they
By noon most cunningly did steal away,
And withered in my hand.

"My hand was next to them, and then my heart.
I took, without more thinking, in good part
Time's gentle admonition;
Who did so sweetly Death's sad taste convey,
Making my mind to smell my fatal day,
Yet sugaring the suspicion.

"Farewell, dear Flowers, sweetly your time ye spend,
Fit while ye lived for smell or ornament,
And after death for cures.
I follow straight without complaints or grief,
Since if my scent be good, I care not if
It be as short as yours."

It was not without a struggle, however, that Herbert gave up one after another of his duties; the last he yielded was the daily service in the old chapel opposite his house. His wife saw that this had become too much for him, and told him so; and he said, "My life cannot be better spent than in the service of my Master Jesus, who has done and suffered so much for me; but I will not be wilful; Mr. Bostock shall be appointed to read the prayers to-morrow, and I will now be only a hearer of them, till this mortal shall put on immortality."

The Sunday before his death he called for one of his musical instruments, and having tuned it, he played and sang some of the verses of a poem he had written once on a Sabbath-day:—

"O day most calm, most bright,
The fruit of this, the next world's bud,
The indorsement of supreme delight,
Writ by a Friend and with His blood;
The couch of Time; Care's balm and bay,
The week were dark, but for Thy light,
Thy torch doth show the way.

"The Sundays of man's life,
Threaded together on Time's string,
Make bracelets to adorn the wife
Of the eternal, glorious King.
On Sunday Heaven's gate stands ope;
Blessings are plentiful and rife,
More plentiful than hope.

"Thou art a day of mirth;
And where the week-days trail on ground,
Thy flight is higher, as thy birth.
O let me take thee at the bound,
Leaping with thee from seven to seven,
Till that we both, being tossed from earth,
Fly hand in hand to Heaven."

After Herbert's death, the sacred lyrics he had sung were arranged and published in a little volume called "The Temple," in allusion to the verse in the Psalms which speaks of the whole world as one vast temple, in which every created thing sings the praise of God.

There were other writers who followed Herbert in his consecration of the gift of song to the glory of God. Christopher Harvey wrote "The Synagogue or Shadow of the Temple," in imitation of Herbert. Henry Vaughan wrote sacred lyrics, one or two of which are among the sweetest in our literature. We must take some of the verses from Vaughan's stanzas on "Departed Friends":—

"They are all gone into the world of light!
And I alone sit lingering here;
Their very memory is fair and bright,
And my sad thoughts doth clear.

"It glows and glitters in my cloudy breast,
Like stars upon some gloomy grove,
Or those fair beams in which this hill is dressed,
After the sun's remove.

"I see them walking in an air of glory,
Whose light doth trample on my days;
My days, which are at best but dull and hoary,
Mere glimmerings and decays.

"O holy Hope and high Humility!
High as the Heavens above;
These are your walks, and you have showed them me,
To kindle my cold love.

"Dear beauteous Death; the jewel of the just,
Shining nowhere but in the dark;
What mysteries do lie beyond thy dust,
Could man outlook that mark.

"He that hath found some fledged bird's nest may know
At first sight if the bird be flown;
But what fair dell or grove he sings in now,
That is to him unknown.

"And yet as Angels in some brighter dreams
Call to the soul, when man doth sleep;
So some strange thoughts transcend our wonted themes,
And into glory peep."

Whilst Herbert, Vaughan, and others were singing of sacred things, there was many a lyric poet among the cavaliers around the king who could take up a viol or lute and chant the praises of a beautiful lady, or sing a merry song of pleasure. As the war came on, and the cavaliers were fighting in the thick of it, the spirit of devoted loyalty to the king takes the place of surface sentiment, and a fine, light-hearted contempt for the luxuries they had cheerfully sacrificed for the king's sake shows that the pleasure songs do not really indicate a merely selfish love of the good things of this life. This is how Lovelace, who lost fortune and

everything in the king's cause, sings to the lady he loved on "Going to the Wars":—

"Tell me not, sweet, I am unkind,
That from the nunnery
Of thy chaste breast and quiet mind
To war and arms I fly.

"True, a new mistress now I chase,
The first foe in the field;
And with a stronger faith embrace
A sword, a horse, a shield.

"Yet this inconstancy is such
As you too shall adore;
I could not love you, dear, so much,
Loved I not honour more."

After the beginning of the war, when the Parliament, though in arms against the king, had no wish to see him a prisoner in their hands, but only to force upon him conditions binding him to keep the laws, Alexander Brome, on the side of the king, puts the following mock song into the mouth of a Parliamentarian leader:—

"Fight on, brave soldiers, for the cause!
Fear not the cavaliers!
Their threatenings are as senseless as
Our jealousies and fears.
'Tis you must perfect this great work,
And all malignants slay;
You must bring back the king again—
The clean contrary way.

"When Charles we've bankrupt made like us,
Of crown and power bereft him;
And all his loyal subjects slain,
And none but rebels left him.
When we have beggar'd all the land,
And sent our trunks away,
We'll make him then a glorious prince—
The clean contrary way.

"'Tis to preserve his majesty
That we against him fight,
Nor are we ever beaten back,
Because our cause is right.
If any make a scruple on't
Our declarations say,
Who fight for us fight for the king—
The clean contrary way.

"At Keinton,* Brentford, Plymouth, York,
And divers places more,
What victories we saints obtained!
The like ne'er seen before.
How often we Prince Rupert killed,
And bravely won the day,
The wicked cavaliers did run—
The clean contrary way.

"The true religion we maintain,
The kingdom's peace and plenty;
The privilege of Parliament,
Not known to one of twenty;
The ancient fundamental laws,
And teach men to obey
Their lawful sovereign, and all these—
The clean contrary way.

"And though the king be much misled
By that malignant crew,
He'll find us honest, and at last
Give all of us our due;
For we do wisely plot and plot
Rebellion to destroy;
He sees we stand for peace and truth—
The clean contrary way."

Thus the cavaliers sang with a light heart through failure and defeat, and the loss of lands and fortune, for, as Alexander Brome again sings:—

* Keinton, Edgehill. All these victories were really claimed by the Royalists.

"We do not suffer here alone,
Though we are beggared, so's the king;
'Tis sin t'have wealth, when he has none,
Tush! poverty's a royal thing!"

And Cartwright, who before the war broke out was a preacher at Oxford and wrote some good lyrics, thus merrily describes a dinner to which twenty hungry troopers sit down:—

"*Imprimis*, some rice porridge, sweet and hot,
Three knobs of sugar season the whole pot.
Item, one pair of eggs in a great dish,
So ordered that they cover all the fish.
Item, one gaping haddock's head, which will
At least affright the stomach, if not fill.
Item, one thing in circles, which we take
Some for an eel, but th' wiser for a snake.
We have not still the same, sometimes we may,
Eat muddy plaice, or wheat; perhaps next day
Red or white herrings, or an apple-pie;
There's some variety in misery.

* * * * *

In the abundance of this want, you will
Wonder perhaps how I can use my quill?
Troth, I am like small birds, which now in spring,
When they have nought to eat, do sit and sing."

In like spirit, John Cleveland, who followed the king through the fortunes of the war, writes "The Poor Cavalier, in Memory of his Old Suit"—the suit which was scarlet once,

"When bloody votes were green,
Ere ripe rebellion had a full age power
To commit Laud and Gourney to the Tower."

Then he traces the history of the war in the rents and disasters of his suit—

'I have observed since Leslie's coming in
Thou hast been still declining with the King,

Spite Fairfax and the Scots did all agree
To take our sleep from us, thy *nap* from thee.
But to declare thee in the State concerned,
When Pomfret was relieved, then thou wert turned.
Prove thou didst wear new buttons on thy breast,
When baffled Waller did retreat from th' West.
Nay, may I want belief, if, when the report
Of lost Bridgewater first arrived at Court,
Each whisper did not rend thee, I could tell
Still by new holes, how our disasters fell."

Robert Herrick was a sweet singer of the time, whose sympathies were with the king, though he took no part in the wars. He was a clergyman in Devonshire until the Parliament deprived him of his living, when he came to London. The following couplets show his feeling in regard to the question of the right of kings :—

"That prince who may do nothing but what's just,
Rules but by leave, and takes his crown on trust."

"'Twixt kings and subjects there's this mighty odds,
Subjects are taught by men, kings by the gods."

And this is one of Herrick's songs :—

"TO DAFFODILS.

"Fair daffodils, we weep to see
You haste away so soon,
As yet the early rising sun
Has not attained his noon.
Stay, stay,
Until the hasting day
Has run,
But to the Even-song ;
And having prayed together, we
Will go with you along.

"We have as short a time to stay as you,
We have as short a spring ;
As quick a growth to meet decay,
As you or anything.

We die,
As your hours do, and dry
Away,
Like to the summer's rain;
Or as the pearls of morning's dew,
Ne'er to be found again."

We have said that poetry does not belong to any party. It was more cultivated by the cavaliers, for their life was more a life of song and pleasure; and there are, therefore, a larger number of song-writers on the side of the king. But there is poetry of feeling and action which is never put into words, and of this there was a deep flowing spring among the Puritans. They had also their song-writers though, and one of the most characteristic of these is George Wither. He was a thorough sturdy Englishman, simple, truth-loving, and manly, with a scorn of all affectations of manner, fashions, or sentiment. He describes his own character in the following lines:—

"I have no pleasure in acquaintance where
The rules of state and ceremony are
Observed so seriously, that I must dance
And act o'er all the compliments of France
And Spain and Italy before I can
Be taken for a well-bred Englishman;
And every time we meet be forced again
To put in action that most idle scene.
I have no Muses that will serve the turn
Of every triumph, and rejoice or mourn
Upon a minute's warning for their hire,
If with old sherry they themselves inspire.
I am not of a temper like to those
That can provide an hour's sad talk in prose
For any funeral, and then go dine,
And choke my grief with sugar-plums and wine.
I cannot at the claret sit and laugh,
And then, half tipsy, write an epitaph;
I cannot (for my life) my pen compel
Upon the praise of any man to dwell,

Unless I know, or think, at least, his worth
To be the same which I have blazed forth.
I have no friends which once affected were,
But to my heart this day they sit as near
As when I most endeared them, though they seem
To fall from my opinion or esteem;
For precious time in idle would be spent,
If I with all should always compliment;
And till my love I may to purpose show,
I care not whe'r they think I love or no.
For sure I am, if any find me changed,
Their greatness, not their meanness, me estranged.

* * * * *

But whatsoe'er betide, I know full well
My Father, who above the clouds doth dwell,
An eye upon His wandering child doth cast,
And He will fetch me to my home at last.
Then to vouchsafe me yet more favours here,
He that supplies my want hath took my care.
A rush I care not who condemneth me,
That sees not what my soul's intentions be.
I care not though to all men known it were,
Both whom I love or hate, for none I fear.
I care for no more time than will amount
To do my work and make up my account;
I care for no more money than will pay
The reckoning and the charges of the day;
And if I need not now, I will not borrow,
For fear of wants that I may have to-morrow.
My mind's my kingdom, and I will permit
No other's will to have the rule of it,
For I am free; and no man's power I know,
Did make me thus, nor shall unmake me now.
But through a spirit none can quench in me
This mind I got, and this my mind shall be."

It was the fashion in the love-songs of the cavaliers to affect an intense admiration for some lady, and it was considered a compliment to her to complain of her indifference and coldness towards her admirer. This unreality

and profession of false sentiment drew from truth-speaking George Wither his song of "The Manly Heart."

" Shall I, wasting in despair,
Die because a woman's fair?
Or make pale my cheeks with care
'Cause another's rosy are?
Be she fairer than the day,
Or the flowery meads in May;
If she be not so to me,
What care I how fair she be!

" Should my heart be grieved or pined
'Cause I see a woman kind?
Or a well-disposed nature
Joined with a lovely feature?
Be she meeker, kinder than
Turtle-dove or pelican;
If she be not so to me,
What care I how kind she be!

" Shall a woman's virtues move
Me to perish for her love?
Or her well-deserving known
Make me quite forget mine own?
Be she with that goodness blest
That may gain her name of best;
If she be not such to me,
What care I how good she be!

" 'Cause her fortune seems too high,
Shall I play the fool and die?
Those that bear a noble mind,
Where they want of riches find,
Think what with them they would do
That without them dare to woo;
And unless that mind I see,
What care I though great she be!

" Great, or good, or kind, or fair,
I will ne'er the more despair.
If she love me, this believe,
I will die ere she shall grieve.

If she slight me when I woo,
I can scorn and bid her go;
For if she be not for me,
What care I for whom she be!'

When the war began, Wither, who had been brought up as a lawyer, sold his estate, raised a troop for the Parliament, and led his men into the battle-field. His song of the Puritan soldier shows the spirit that he and his comrades carried with them into the soldier's life:—

"Now in myself I notice take,
What life we soldiers lead;
My hair stands up, my heart doth ache,
My soul is full of dread;
And to declare
This horrid fear,
Throughout my bones I feel
A shivering cold
On me lay hold,
And run from head to heel.

"It is not loss of limbs or breath
Which hath me so dismayed,
Nor mortal wounds, nor groans of death
Have made me thus arrayed;
When cannons roar
I start no more
Than mountains from their place,
Nor feel I fears,
Though swords and spears
Are darted at my face.

"A soldier it would ill become
Such common things to fear,
The shouts of war, the thundering drum,
His courage up doth cheer;
Though dust and smoke
His passage choke,
He boldly marcheth on,
And thinketh scorn
His back to turn,
Till all be lost or won.

"That whereupon the dread begins
Which thus appalleth me,
Is that huge troop of crying sins
Which rife in soldiers be;
The wicked mind
Wherewith I find
Into the field they go,
More terror hath
Than all the wrath
And engines of the foe.

"Defend me, Lord, from those misdeeds
Which my profession shame,
And from the vengeance that succeeds
When we are so to blame;
Preserve me far
From acts of war
Where Thou dost peace command,
And in my breast
Let mercy rest,
Though justice use my hand.

"Be Thou my leader to the field,
My head in battle arm;
Be Thou a breastplate and a shield,
To keep my soul from harm.
For live or die
I will rely
On Thee, O Lord, alone;
And in this trust,
Though fall I must,
I cannot be undone."

From Wither we pass on to the great poet of that time, Milton, who, like Spenser, was Puritan in his sympathies, but who yet rises so much into the heaven of pure truth as to be above all parties.

CHAPTER XIII.

MILTON (1608—1674).

"He who would not be frustrate of his hope to write well hereafter of laudable things, ought himself to be a true poem." These are Milton's own words, and we are going to see in his life and work how he sought to make of them "one grand sweet song;" for what is a poem but beautiful and noble thoughts put into verse? And if truth and love, self-denial and steadfastness to duty, courage and patience, are beautiful in words, must they not be far more beautiful and noble when they are expressed in life and work?

John Milton was born in Bread Street, Cheapside, on the 9th of December, 1608. His father had been cast off by his family in the Reformation times for becoming a Protestant; he had taste and genius in music, and is known as a writer of madrigals and hymn tunes. His mother was a woman of great gentleness and charity, and had somewhat delicate health. His first teacher was a Mr. Young, a Puritan minister, whom Milton loved through life as a second father.

When Milton was twelve years old he was sent to St. Paul's School (that school which Colet founded, and of which we have already heard); and no doubt as the little boy ran in and out, he often looked up at the statue of the holy child Jesus over the gate, with its motto, "Hear ye Him."

Milton was a busy student, even in his school-days;

the same earnest longing to reach the highest possible degree of excellence in his work, that he showed through life, often kept him up till midnight over his lessons; and his industry was quickened by his love for his teacher, the son of the head-master, Alexander Gill. Milton also formed a strong and lasting friendship with one of his school-fellows, a boy named Charles Diodati, the son of a Protestant Italian physician, who had left his country for the sake of his religion, and had come to London. To him Milton, in later life, tells all his thoughts and feelings, and no doubt the boys spent many happy hours of their school-days in talking together with the freedom and trust of perfect sympathy over all they loved and enjoyed in the present, and hoped to be and do in the future.

Milton early showed his power as a poet. His first published verse was written when he was fifteen; and we must notice that he begins and ends his work as a poet with the expression of perfect trust in the love and wisdom of God. This was the anchor of his life, from the days when the bright, young school-boy, with all his life before him, wrote—

> "Let us with a gladsome mind,
> Praise the Lord, for He is kind;
> For His mercies aye endure,
> Ever faithful, ever sure,"

to the days when the blind, much-tried old man, his life closing, wrote his last words as a poet:—

> "All is best, though we oft doubt
> What the unsearchable dispose
> Of Highest Wisdom brings about,
> And ever best found in the close."

Milton's hymn shows us something of the character of his mind in these early days. Another memorial of his

childhood remains in a picture of him at ten years old, painted by Jansen.

Milton stayed at school until he was sixteen. In addition to his school work, he read at home many books, which were lent to him by a printer who lived in the same street; and it was through him that Milton early read and learned to love Spenser's poetry, especially the "Faerie Queene." He had one sister, older than himself, and one brother—Christopher—seven years younger. In 1624 his sister married a Mr. Phillips; and early in the next year, Milton, then sixteen, went to Christ's College, Cambridge. It was soon after this, on March 27, 1625, that James I. died. Milton had had seven years of education at home and at school, and he now had seven years of study at the university. His father's wish was to train him for the Church, and he was resolved to give him every advantage which could best prepare him for this work.

But those studies, which would have trained Milton as a teacher of men in the Church, were giving him just the culture and training he needed for becoming a great teacher of men through literature. He felt that God had given him one of his highest gifts in making him a poet; and with that humble and earnest longing for the highest excellence in everything, Milton's thought now was, not to write at once a great poem, but to use every help of culture and intellectual growth, so as to rise to the fullest exercise of his powers before he began his life's work. Meantime, he wrote small poems at college, when any circumstance happened which touched his feelings and called forth a song—as the little birds sing at the breaking of light on the dawn of a new morning, or when they meet in the spring-time. One of the first poems that Milton wrote thus was called forth by the death of his little niece, the first child of his sister Mrs. Phillips; and we may notice in it the tender, thoughtful way in which the young uncle of seventeen

speaks of the baby. He calls it "the fairest flower," "soft silken primrose;" and he cannot believe that even the sweet little body can turn to corruption; while of the soul he says:—

> "Oh no! for something in thy face did shine
> Above mortality, that show'd thou wast divine."

He tries to follow the still living spirit through the heavenly world, and closes with words of comfort to his sister:—

> "Then thou, the mother of so sweet a child,
> Her false-imagined loss cease to lament,
> And wisely learn to curb thy sorrows wild.
> Think what a present thou to God has sent,
> And render Him with patience what he lent."

The early dawn of the Christmas morning of 1629 called forth from Milton his "Hymn on the Morning of Christ's Nativity." He had risen when it was still dark and the stars were shining; he thought of the Wise Men bringing their gifts to the Holy Child, and he asks himself:—

> "Hast thou no verse, no hymn, or solemn strain,
> To welcome Him to this His new abode?
> O! run, prevent them with thy humble ode,
> And lay it lowly at His blessed feet,
> Have thou the honour first thy Lord to greet."

Then, as he looks out over the snow-covered land, it seems to him as though the earth had thrown "the saintly veil of maiden white" over her face this "happy morn" to hide her shame of sin before the pure eyes of "her great Master;" and the silence of the early dawn reminds him of the peace that was upon earth when "the Prince of Light His reign of Peace upon the earth began." As the morn advances, the stars are still shining, and it seems to Milton as if they are unwilling on such a day—

"To take their flight
For all the morning light;
But in their glimmering orbs did glow,
Until their Lord Himself bespake, and bid them go."

Then Milton thinks of the shepherds keeping their flocks by night, and of the heavenly music which they heard, and the song of the angels. Meanwhile, the day breaks more and more, until at length the sun himself rises, and "the flocking shadows pale" fly from the world before his beams; and that seems to him like the dark shadows of the heathen religions flying from the world at the birth of Christ, and the falling of the idols from their thrones. Milton wrote another poem that Christmas—a cheerful ode in Latin—to his friend Charles Diodati, who was keeping Christmas merrily in the country.

Amongst the other occasional poems written by Milton at college, we can only notice two: "At a Solemn Music," and "On being arrived to the Age of Twenty-three." Milton had been brought up from his childhood in the knowledge and love of music, but to him, as to Shakespeare, music was more than a mere "concord of sweet sounds," delighting the ear: he felt in it the sense of that most blessed harmony which exists when all things in heaven and earth are in accord through love, and all move in obedience to the laws of God. In his poem he calls upon the solemn music of earth to represent to us—

"That undisturbed song of pure concent
Aye sung before the sapphire-coloured throne
To Him that sits thereon"—

in order that we may strive by love and duty to—

"Rightly answer that melodious noise,
As once we did, till disproportioned sin
Jarr'd against Nature's chime, and with harsh din

Broke the fair Music that all creatures made
To their great Lord, whose love their motions sway'd
In perfect diapason, whilst they stood
In first obedience, and their state of good.
Oh, may we soon again renew that song,
And keep in tune with Heaven, till God, ere long,
To His celestial concert us unite,
To live with Him, and sing in endless morn of light."

We cannot but notice the clear perception which Milton had thus early of how all true life consists in the perfection of love and duty, and that it is this which makes the blessedness of heaven, and which raises our world towards it.

On the 9th of December, 1631, Milton was twenty-three years old. He was still at college, and had had now six years of study there, but he did not feel as though he had yet reached the standard he aimed at; and in the humility which springs from reaching forth towards a high ideal, it seemed to him that he had attained less ripeness than some others who earlier began their work in life; yet even in this slower growth, as it seems to him, he is content, if only he is preparing for a life of service to God in any way:—

"Yet be it less or more, or soon or slow,
It shall be still in strictest measure even
To that same lot, however mean or high,
Towards which Time leads me, and the will of Heaven;
All is, if I have grace to use it so,
As ever in my great Taskmaster's eye."

During Milton's college life events were happening in England which no doubt deeply stirred the minds of himself and his companions at Cambridge. Milton was through life a true lover of his country; he was not content to live in a world of beautiful thoughts and fancies, caring little for the real world of living men and women, and for their progress in truth and right. He loved liberty, when liberty meant freedom for thought and right action, and loving it

himself, he claimed it for all; and he had that strong sense of law and justice which cannot endure to see these set aside. We may be sure, then, that he watched with anxious concern the events of these seven years since Charles I. came to the throne.

In the second year of his reign and of Milton's college life, Parliament was arbitrarily dissolved for endeavouring to establish the great principle of the English Constitution, that a minister is responsible for the actions of the sovereign. Then followed the endeavour to raise money by illegal means; the murder of Buckingham; the persecution of the Puritans, and the emigration to New England. From 1629 there had been no Parliament; and when Milton took his degree in 1632, the king was endeavouring to establish a monarchy in England which should claim the right to govern both State and Church without the voice of the English nation. The struggle between absolute and constitutional monarchy was now engaging the minds of all men. The attempt which Charles I. and Laud were making to overrule the Church, and to force upon the clergy a perfect similarity both of political and religious opinions, made Milton determine not to become a clergyman. "Perceiving," said he, "what tyranny had invaded the Church, that he who would take orders must subscribe slave, I thought better to prefer a blameless silence, to the sacred office of speaking, bought and begun with servitude and forswearing."

So Milton returned to his father's house at Horton, in Buckinghamshire. In this pleasant country home he spent five years in reading and study, still training himself for future work as a poet, and not satisfied that he had already attained all he might become. His mother's ill-health would also keep him near her side at this time. During this period he continued to write occasional poems as at college. One of these was a Latin poem addressed to his father, "Ad Patrem." In it he urges the high calling

of a poet, and thanks his father for the liberal education he had given him, and for his perception of what were really the best things of life, the culture of the whole being rather than the making of money. He says how it was by his father's advice that to the thorough knowledge of the Greek and Latin languages and literature he had added French, Italian, and Hebrew; and now, in accordance with his father's wish and his own, he would study "whate'er the heaven contains, the earth beneath it, and the air between," believing all would prove intellectual gain to him; and he concludes with the hope that these praises of his own father may "improve the fathers of a distant age."

It was at this time that Milton wrote a pair of poems, which he called "L'Allegro" and "Il Penseroso." The meaning of the Italian words is—L'Allegro, one who has in his heart cause of contentment; and Il Penseroso, one who weighs or considers. In a sound, true mind there is a hearty response to all the bright cheerful notes in nature and life, as well as to the deep, solemn music; and this Milton shows in these two poems, which are not to be taken as contrasting two characters, but as representing both sides of a complete man. The two poems are exactly alike in structure, and are made thus in order to form the two halves of one whole. We see in them the wide soul of the complete man, which has sympathy with all that is true and pure, whether gay or grave, in the whole of nature and life. The only things that he turns from and would banish are the "vain deluding joys" of folly and sin, and the "loathed melancholy" of dark unbelief and despair.

The exact resemblance in the two poems is easily traced by placing them side by side. Each begins by driving hence, not each other, but the false side of the other half. Thus "L'Allegro," "Hence, *loathed* Melancholy;" and "Il Penseroso," "Hence, *vain deluding* joys." Despair being the foe to cheerfulness, and levity to thoughtfulness and

deep feeling. Then each poem has an invitation to the true spirit of which it is the subject: "Come, thou goddess fair and free—heart-easing Mirth;" and "Hail, thou goddess, sage and holy—divinest Melancholy." According to the fashion of the time, each has then given to it an allegorical parentage. L'Allegro is called the child of Zephyr, the fresh light breeze, and of Aurora, the morning; while Penseroso is the child of Saturn, the oldest of the gods, and of Vesta, the goddess of fire and light; which would mean that thoughtfulness springs from experience and knowledge. Then the poet listens for the Allegro music of Nature and life, and then for the Penseroso, which completes the grand harmony. It is in the glad sounds of morning that he first hears the Allegro—the lark's most joyful song, the "lively din" of the cock crow, the cheerful sounds of hounds and horn, the ploughman "whistling o'er the furrowed land," the blithe song of the milkmaid, and the sound of the mower whetting his scythe, while over all the sun rises "robed in flames and amber light." In Penseroso we have in contrast the calm silence of evening, the time for contemplation, and the only sounds that break it are the song of the nightingale :—

> "Sweet bird, that shunn'st the noise of folly,
> Most musical, most melancholy;"

and

> "The far-off curfew sound,
> Over some wide-watered shore,
> Swinging slow with sullen roar."

While instead of the rising sun, there is "the wandering moon"—

> "Like one that had been led astray
> Through the Heaven's wide pathless way."

The cheerful music of human life rises in "L'Allegro," when, later in the day, friends meet together—

> "And young and old come forth to play
> On a sunshine holiday;"

while from the church, "the merry bells ring round,"

> "And the jocund rebecs sound
> To many a youth and many a maid
> Dancing in the chequered shade:
> Till the live-long daylight fail,
> Then to the spicy nut-brown ale;"

and to the telling of old folk-lore fairy stories until—

> "Thus done the tales, to bed they creep,
> By whispering winds soon lulled asleep."

But after the peasant's holiday is over, the poet still hears the allegro of human life in the more stately entertainments of "knights and barons bold," in "towered cities," in wedding festivals, in masks and plays, especially Ben Jonson's, or if—

> "Sweetest Shakespeare, Fancy's child,
> Warble his native wood-notes wild."

Instead of the gladness of social meetings we have in Penseroso, as night advances, the joys of solitary study. There is the watching of the stars, the following of Plato in his great thoughts about the soul, the bringing before the imagination the stories of the old Greek tragedies, or Homer's "Tale of Troy;" the reading of Chaucer's tales, or the passing with Spenser through—

> "Forests and enchantments drear,
> Where more is meant than meets the ear."

Thus the night of thoughtfulness is spent: and morning breaks, not as in "L'Allegro," but shaded in cloud, "while waking winds are piping loud," and the raindrops fall from the eaves; or if the sun flares forth, then there is hiding from "Day's garish eye in the dark depths of the solemn

pine-wood," or in "the dim religious light" of "the studious cloister's pale."

Each poem now closes with the setting of life to music, whether it be the cheerful Allegro—

> "Soft Lydian airs,
> With linked sweetness long drawn out,
> With wanton heed and giddy cunning,
> The melting voice through mazes running;"

or the sacred, solemn Penseroso—

> "Of service high and anthems clear,
> As may with sweetness through mine ear
> Dissolve me into ecstasies,
> And bring all Heaven before mine eyes."

Then comes the double resolve of the poet, which expresses his determination to accept and enjoy all that is true and pure in the round of Nature and life.

> "These delights, if thou canst give,
> Mirth, with thee I mean to live."

> "These pleasures, Melancholy, give,
> And I with thee will choose to live."

We have said already that we should find Milton's own life and work to be a true poem, and we see in everything that he writes that he does not merely put into verse some beautiful idea or sentiment because it is beautiful, but because he honestly believes it to be true, and, as soon as the occasion comes, he puts the same idea or sentiment into action. We are now going to see how the inner thought of "L'Allegro" and "Il Penseroso" was carried out by Milton in his works at that time.

There were in England just then two classes of persons which Milton had, perhaps, in his mind when he wrote these poems. There were the cavaliers, who delighted in

wit and fancy; and there were the Puritans, who looked suspiciously upon "heart-easing mirth," even in its purest form. But Milton, true to his belief that both seriousness and gaiety of heart had a very close connection, and were both needful to complete the ideal of life, wrote at this period two masques. The masque was one of those things which the Puritans condemned as a vain amusement; but we shall see how Milton, with the poetry, music, dancing, and all the gay effects and graceful charm of the masque, weaves in the deepest thoughtfulness, the most earnest religious purpose, and the purest feeling.

Not very far from Horton there lived at Harefield House the Dowager Countess of Derby, and nearer still to Horton, at Ashridge Park, lived the Earl of Bridgewater and his family of ten children. He was stepson to the countess; and on one occasion, when her grandchildren wished to do her honour, Milton wrote for them the little masque of "Arcades." The music was composed by a friend of his named Henry Lawes, and it was probably through him that Milton was requested to supply the poetry for the masque. It was a simple domestic masque, performed in the garden, and only intended to express love and honour for the old lady, who, besides having a poem written for her by Milton, had had also a poem dedicated to her by Spenser in her youth.

It was probably after this that Milton produced for the same family the state masque of "Comus," written in the very spirit which "L'Allegro" and "Il Penseroso" express, full of the most exquisite grace and bright fancy, and the sweetest delicacy of feeling, joined with serious thought and a strong, earnest, moral purpose.

The Earl of Bridgewater had been appointed President of Wales, but for two years he did not go into residence at Ludlow Castle. During this time the many retainers, soldiers, and servants in the castle had fallen into an evil

life of drunkenness and wild revelry. In 1634 his family joined him at Ludlow; and he then planned to give a state entertainment to all the country round. Part of the amusements was to be a masque, performed by the three younger children of the family, the Lady Alice, aged fifteen, and her two brothers, Lord Brackley, fourteen, and Thomas Egerton, thirteen.

Milton then had these three things before him in his work—the masque was to be suitable for children to perform; it was to have enough of striking pageant to please the eyes, and of bright fancy to entertain the spectators; and, "as ever in his great Taskmaster's eye," he would make it a beautiful lesson of temperance and purity to the wild revellers of the castle, and to the guests living in the corrupt society of that time. He called the masque "Comus." The word meant originally the rabble of noisy drunken villagers who followed the procession of Bacchus, dancing and singing out of time with the stately measure of the music of the priests. Afterwards the word Comus was used for all intemperate, disorderly pleasure; and this was personified as a god who was said to be the son of Bacchus and Circe.

Let us suppose that we are at Ludlow Castle on the 29th of September, 1634; we find ourselves in the great hall of the castle, which is crowded with the company, in the gay dress of Charles I.'s time, while every inch of standing ground at the lower end of the hall is filled by the retainers and servants. On the daïs at the upper end of the hall a quantity of young trees, shrubs, and green boughs represent a wild wood. Presently an angel clothed in white descends or enters on the daïs, and declares that he is sent from heaven to this low earth, where men—

> "Strive to keep up a frail and feverish being,
> Unmindful of the crown that virtue gives,"

in order to guard those who yet—

> "By due steps aspire
> To lay their just hands on that golden key,
> That opes the palace of eternity."

He then explains that the three children of a noble peer (Earl of Bridgewater) are travelling to their father's house, and have to pass through this wood, wherein lives the sorcerer Comus, who "offers to every weary traveller," thirsty and hot, "some liquor in a crystal glass." Many are tempted to quench their thirst by drinking from the glass, when—

> "Soon as the potion works, their human countenance
> Th' express resemblance of the gods is changed
> Into some brutish form of wolf, or bear,
> Or ounce, or tiger, hog, or bearded goat.
> And they, unconscious of their degradation,
> Boast themselves more comely than before."

The company would easily perceive the allegory thus far: how the wild wood represented the world and its dangers; Comus and his glass, the intemperance of the time in which, while men degraded themselves to brutes, they thought themselves "more comely than before," and sang the praise of drinking in songs, which declared—

> "Wine makes the soul for action fit,
> Who drinks most wine hath the most wit;
> Who dares not drink's a wretched wight,
> Nor do I think that man dares fight."

When this was a popular song, and to drink too much was considered a sign of manliness and a mark of sense, we must notice Milton's courage in showing the fashionable sin in its true colours.

The attendant spirit has to assume the form of a human being, in order to help the children, and he now says he will take the shape of a minstrel belonging to the house;

this is Henry Lawes, and as the part was played by him, he merely lays aside his disguise, but as he is about to do this he exclaims, "I hear the tread of hateful steps, I must be viewless now," and disappears. Now all the company hear a loud disorderly clatter and tramp, and presently there rushes in Comus, waving his glass in one hand, and with a magic rod in the other, by which he "makes things seem other than they are;" he is followed by "a rout of monsters" with the heads of beasts, but "otherwise like men and women, their apparel glittering, and making a riotous, unruly noise." Comus says the sun has sunk, and the evening star appears in heaven:—

> "Meanwhile welcome joy and feast,
> Midnight shout and revelry,
> Tipsy dance and jollity.
> Rigour now is gone to bed,
> And advice with scrupulous head,
> Strict age, and sour severity,
> With their grave saws in slumber lie."

The four last lines express the tone in which those who sought to live a true life in accordance with God's laws were often spoken of at that time.

Then Comus and the monsters begin a disorderly dance, in the midst of which Comus suddenly exclaims—

> "Break off, break off, I feel the different pace
> Of some chaste footing near about this ground."

The rabble run and hide among the trees, while Comus says he will take the form of some harmless villager, and try to entice the stranger into his palace, for, says he—

> "I under fair pretence of friendly ends,
> And well placed words of glozing courtesy,
> Baited with reasons not unplausible,
> Wind me into the easy-hearted man,
> And hug him into snares."

Comus draws aside, and the young Lady Alice Egerton enters, representing no character but her own, dressed most likely all in white, as the symbol of the stainless purity she was to personify, and in contrast to the glittering raiment of the herd of Comus. As she comes forward she says that she is looking for her brothers, who left her to seek food and a resting-place for her, and who have not returned. She has heard the noise of the riotous music and dance of the monsters; the darkness is gathering around her; and she finds herself alone. Stories of haunted places and ghosts come into her mind, but she says—

> "These thoughts may startle well, but not astound
> The virtuous mind, that ever walks attended
> By a strong-siding champion, Conscience.—
> O, welcome, pure-eyed Faith, white-handed Hope,
> Thou hovering angel girt with golden wings,
> And thou unblemished form of Chastity;
> I see ye visibly, and now believe
> That He, the supreme Good, t'whom all things ill
> Are but as slavish officers of vengeance,
> Would send a glistering guardian if need were,
> To keep my life and honour unassailed."

Thus brave and calm, through pure innocence and trust in God, the Lady Alice tries to let her brothers know where she is by singing a song, a lovely echo-song, which Comus hears in his hiding-place, and says—

> 'Sure something holy lodges in that breast,
> And with these raptures moves the vocal air
> To testify his hidden residence."

He has heard his mother Circe and the Syrens sing—

> "Yet they in peaceful slumber lull'd the sense,
> And in sweet madness robbed it of itself;"

—the effect of music appealing only to the senses; while of this song—the music of true-hearted love and concern for her brothers, and of pure, sweet fancies—Comus says—

> "But such a sacred and home-felt delight,
> Such sober certainty of waking bliss,
> I never heard till now. I'll speak to her,
> And she shall be my queen."

Then, in the disguise of a shepherd, Comus comes forward. The lady asks him if he has seen her brothers. He pretends he has, and that he can take her to find them, or to a cottage where she may lodge in safety. Comus and Lady Alice then go out on one side of the wood; and presently her two brothers, Lord John Brackley and Thomas Egerton, enter on the other. The boys are talking about their sister, and Thomas, the younger, is picturing to himself all the harm that may befall her in the wood. But the elder brother, with more of his sister's spirit, endeavours to assure him that her perfect truth and innocence are her best protection, that the sweet peace that ever dwells with goodness will keep her calm in the midst of darkness and danger, and if there should be peril near her it cannot touch her, for—

> "So dear to Heaven is saintly chastity,
> That when a soul is found sincerely so,
> A thousand liveried angels lackey her,
> Driving far off each thing of guilt and sin,
> And in clear dream and solemn vision,
> Tell her of things that no gross ear can hear."

The elder brother's trust in spiritual things is better founded than the younger's fear of earthly things. The guardian angel, sent beforehand from heaven to preserve the children through the dangers of the wild wood, now comes to them, still disguised as "the servant of their house." He tells them he has heard their sister singing; and he tells them also of the enticements and witcheries of Comus and his cup. The younger brother immediately takes alarm: "Is this the confidence you gave me, brother?" The elder replies—

"Yes, and keep it still :
Lean on it safely; for against the threats
Of malice or of sorcery, or that power
Which erring men call chance, this I hold firm ;
Virtue may be assailed, but never hurt,
Surprised by unjust force, but not enthrall'd,
Yea, even that which mischief meant most harm
Shall in the happy trial prove most glory ;
But evil on itself shall back recoil,
And mix no more with goodness, when at last
Gathered like scum, and settled to itself,
It shall be in eternal restless change
Self-fed and self-consumed ; if this fail,
The pillar'd firmament is rottenness,
And earth's base built on stubble."

Still the elder brother holds fast to his faith that the laws of right and wrong are stronger and more lasting than the laws of Nature ; that heaven and earth shall pass away, but the moral laws of God must endure, and God Himself ever be stronger than the spirit of evil. And ready, through his trust, for action, he proposes at once to find out the monster Comus, and destroy him with his sword. The attendant spirit tells him that evil cannot be put down thus. Christ has said, "My kingdom is not of this world, then would my servants fight." But the angel has a herb—Christianity—with a dark leaf and prickles on it—hard to win and hold in this world, but which in another country—heaven—bears a bright golden flower. With this, the lad may boldly enter the palace itself of Comus without fear of being overcome. "Lead on apace," says the boy, "I'll follow thee."

The scene is then changed from the wood to the palace of Comus. A stately hall is seen furnished with beautiful materials, tables are set covered with dainties, and soft music is heard. This represents the good things of earthly life enjoyed by the senses. In the midst of the beautiful hall and splendid furniture appear the hideous forms of Comus and his monsters, changed to their de-

graded state by giving themselves only to these things, and caring nothing for the higher life of the soul. The Lady Alice sits in an enchanted chair, with her own human countenance and the glory of goodness and intelligence shining in her face; her white dress, a symbol of simplicity and purity in the midst of the glitter. Comus is offering her his glass, and using every persuasion to induce her to taste the liquor. But the lady constantly refuses:—"None," she says,

> "But such as are good men can give good things,
> And that which *is not good is not delicious*
> To a well-governed and wise appetite."

Comus then, finding she cannot be tempted by the sight of things, urges that—

> "If all the world
> Should in a pet of temperance feed on pulse,
> Drink the clear stream and nothing wear but frieze,
> Th' All-giver would be unthanked, would be unpraised,
> Not half His riches known, and yet despised,
> And we should serve Him as a grudging Master,
> As a penurious niggard of His wealth."

And Nature, he urges, would be overloaded with her own productions. Then he endeavours to attack her modesty by tempting her to vanity:—

> "Beauty is Nature's brag, and must be shown
> In courts, at feasts, and high solemnities,
> Where most may wonder at the workmanship;
> It is for homely features to keep home,
> They had their name thence; coarse complexions
> And cheeks of sorry grain will serve to ply
> The sampler, and to tease the housewife's wool.
> What need a vermeil-tinctured lip for that,
> Love-darting eyes, or tresses like the morn?"

In the argument for reckless indulgence, from the fact that God gives all things with a generous hand, as well as in the

contempt expressed for home love and home duty, Milton puts into the mouth of Comus ideas common at that day.

The lady answers that "if every just man that now pines with want" had only a moderate share of those things that pampered luxury heaps upon itself, Nature would not be encumbered with her store, and God would be better praised and thanked for all His gifts, for the glutton and the intemperate "ne'er look to Heaven" in their excess, but "with base ingratitude, cram and blaspheme the Giver."

Comus says this is only "moral babble," the effect of a sour and melancholy disposition; and here again he repeats the common accusations against the Puritans. Then he tries once more to induce Lady Alice to drink from his glass; and just at that moment her brothers rush in with swords drawn, tear the glass from him and dash it on the ground, and drive out Comus and his band of monsters. The attendant spirit now comes in, and tells them they should have snatched the rod of Comus and bound him fast; without his rod reversed they cannot free their sister, who is held by magic spell in her chair. But then the attendant spirit remembers a water nymph—by which Milton represents temperance—and as the Severn flows through the county of Shropshire, she is Sabrina, the spirit of the Severn, the story of whom is told in Geoffrey of Monmouth's Chronicle. She is invoked by a song, which the attendant spirit, Henry Lawes himself, sings.

Sabrina rises, attended by water nymphs, and sings her song:—

"By the rushy-fringed bank,
Where grows the willow and the osier dank,
My sliding chariot stays,
Thick-set with agate and the azure sheen
Of turkois blue, and emerald green,
That in the channel strays;
Whilst from off the waters fleet,
Thus I set my printless feet

O'er the cowslip's velvet head,
That bends not as I tread ;
Gentle swain, at thy request
I am here."

Sabrina then sprinkles pure water on the breast, lips, and fingers of the lady, and touches the chair with her moist, cool hands, and the lady rises. Nothing now remains but for the guardian angel to bring the children in safety to their father's house. The wood had represented the world and its temptations, and the coming home to their father would represent the entrance of those victorious over evil into heaven and the presence of their Father God.

The scene is now changed from the palace of Comus to a view of Ludlow Castle and town. The father and mother come forward, and the guardian angel presents their children to them, saying—

" Heaven hath timely tried their youth,
Their faith, their patience and their truth,
And sent them here through hard assays
With a crown of deathless praise,
To triumph in victorious dance,
O'er sensual folly and intemperance."

A dance then follows: not like the wild measure of Comus and his herd, but stately and graceful. And here Milton again shows his clear-sightedness in seeing things as they really are, for he not only sees through the false gloss which at that time was put upon evil, so as to make wrong seem right, but also into the narrowness of the Puritans, who often made right seem wrong when they condemned innocent things because they were turned to evil. The attendant spirit concludes the masque by expressing the true liberty of just and wide goodness ; he says that he can fly or run all over the green earth, and through the whole of nature ; and can soar from earth to heaven, and—

"Mortals, that would follow me,
Love virtue; she alone is free:
She can teach ye how to climb
Higher than the sphery chime;
Or if virtue feeble were,
Heaven itself would stoop to her."

Though Milton had written such occasional poems as "L'Allegro" and "Il Penseroso," and such a masque as "Comus," he did not consider that he had yet reached the height at which he aimed. He had during these five years at Horton studied with steady diligence Greek and Italian literature, and now he was to add to his studies the knowledge of human life and experience of the world, gained by travelling in other countries. About this time he wrote to his friend Charles Diodati—"As to other points, what God may have determined for me I know not; but this I know, that if He ever instilled an intense love of moral beauty into the breast of any man, He has instilled it into mine; Ceres in the fable pursued not her daughter with a greater keenness of inquiry than I, day and night, the idea of perfection. Hence, whenever I find a man despising the false estimates of the vulgar, and daring to aspire, in sentiment, language, and conduct, to what the highest wisdom through every age has taught us as most excellent, to him I unite myself by a sort of necessary attachment; and if I am so hindered by nature or destiny, that by no exertion or labours of my own I may exalt myself to this summit of worth and honour, yet no powers of heaven or earth will hinder me from looking with reverence and affection upon those who have thoroughly attained this glory, or appear engaged in the successful pursuit of it. You inquire with a kind of solicitude into my thoughts. Hear then, Diodati, but let me whisper in your ear, that I may not blush at my reply; I think (so help me Heaven) of immortality. You inquire what I am about. I nurse my

wings and meditate a flight, but my pegasus rises as yet on very tender pinions. Let us be humbly wise."

Immortality was the high aim which Milton placed before him; and by it he meant, not a mere dream of "waking some morning to find himself famous," but the steady earnest endeavour to fit himself for doing some work which the best men, not only of that generation but in times to come, should judge to be worthy of a lasting place in the literature of his country. And this is how he sought to gain his high aim—"by devout prayer to that Eternal Spirit, who can enrich with all utterance and knowledge, and sends out His seraphim with the hallowed fire of His altar, to touch and purify the lips of whom He pleases; to this must be added industrious and select reading, steady observation, insight into all seemly and generous arts and affairs."

Milton had now made up his mind to write no more until he had further enriched his mind by foreign travel; but as he was on the eve of setting out, a college friend of his, Mr. Edward King, was drowned at sea in crossing from Chester to Ireland. On such an occasion Milton could not be silent, and he joined other friends of Mr. King in writing verses on his early much-lamented death. Milton called his poem "Lycidas." It was a pastoral, the form of poem considered best suited to a poet who had not attained his full ripeness. And Milton, in adopting this form, shows again how all his actions agree with his words. Mr. Edward King was to have been a clergyman, and he had been a diligent student in preparing himself for his future work. But now all this was over, and the question might arise, of what use is hard work, self-denial, and devotion to all that is needed as preparation for life, when death comes and makes it fruitless? Would it not have been as well for Edward King to have spent his time in ease and pleasure? Milton leaves the pastoral form of the poem to reply to this —that we, as living under the pure eyes of God, work for

duty, not for merely selfish ends, and if we fail on earth to gain what we intend, we shall not fail in heaven of God's approval and reward. Then Milton goes on in pastoral form to imagine Triton the herald of the sea, and Camus, or the river Cam and St. Peter of the Galilean lake, all asking why Lycidas should have been drowned. And in the question of St. Peter, Milton leaves the pastoral form of the poem to point out the evil among those of the clergy who entered the Church for the sake of what they could get, and who had no care for their flock. On returning to the pastoral, Milton calls on the earth to bring its flowers and scatter them on the sea where Lycidas lies—

> "Bring the rathe primrose that forsaken dies,
> The tufted crowtoe, and pale jessamine,
> The white pink, and the pansy freaked with jet,
> The glowing violet,
> The musk-rose, and the well-attired woodbine,
> With cowslips wan that hang the pensive head,
> And every flower that sad embroidery wears,
> Bid amaranthus all his beauty shed,
> And daffodillies fill their cups with tears."

The flowers are nearly all of them those that in some way express sorrow and mourning; but when they are to be strown where Lycidas lies, there is the remembrance that the "sounding seas" have washed his body far away, perhaps "beyond the stormy Hebrides," none can tell the spot where his bones may rest, and none can honour him in his ocean burial. But from this sad thought Milton turns, and in strong faith exclaims:—

> "Weep no more, woeful shepherds, weep no more,
> For Lycidas, your sorrow, is not dead,
> Sunk though he be beneath the watery floor;
> So sinks the day-star in the ocean bed,
> And yet anon repairs his drooping head
> And tricks his beams, and with new spangled ore

Flames in the forehead of the morning sky :
So Lycidas sank low, but mounted high
Through the dear might of Him that walked the waves,
Where other groves and other streams along,
With nectar pure his oozy locks he laves,
And hears the unexpressive nuptial song,
In the blest kingdoms meek of joy and love.
There entertain him all the saints above,
In solemn troops and sweet societies
That sing, and, singing, in their glory move,
And wipe the tears for ever from his eyes."

In the spring of 1638 Milton set out for his foreign tour. His father supplied him generously with money; and he carried letters of introduction to many of the most learned men in different towns on the Continent. He first went to Paris, thence to Nice, Genoa, Leghorn, Pisa, and afterwards to Florence, where he stayed two months. Florence must have been full of interest to him; it was the home of Italian literature; here Dante, Petrarch, and Boccaccio had lived; here the Medicis had held their court, and from Florence the later poets and writers had given new life to the literature of Europe. From Florence, Milton passed on to Rome, the seat of the Latin literature, and the scene of so many events full of charm to a poet. But Milton had a richer pleasure still to which he looked forward, and that was a visit to Greece. Greece, the very land of literature, the home of the earliest and greatest poets and thinkers—every mountain, valley, and stream of which was made sacred through the legends, dramas, and poems that Milton had so long and lovingly studied. But while he was in Italy news came from England which made him give up what would have been to him the best part of his tour.

Charles I. had begun to govern without a parliament, and not being able to raise money by taxes, had employed various illegal means for getting money. At the same time

Laud, Archbishop of Canterbury, had been striving to carry out his ideal of Church government and form of service. For this purpose he attempted to force the Liturgy of the Church of England upon Scotland, which had chosen for itself the Presbyterian form. The Scotch rose against this, and took up arms. The king wished to raise an army, but could hope for no support from Parliament; civil war could not but break out in England as soon as the first blow was struck against the Scotch.

Milton was not a mere dreamer of noble things—an enthusiast of self-sacrifice and heroism, who was satisfied for others to act while he pursued at ease his own enjoyment. His life was in very deed a true poem of high thoughts and noblest feeling put at all times into action. So now "the melancholy intelligence," he says, "which I received of the civil commotions in England made me alter my purpose; for I thought it base to be travelling for amusement abroad while my fellow-citizens were fighting for liberty at home." He resolved, therefore, not to go into Greece; but his wish to take his due share, as a true son of England, in the troubles that seemed to be coming upon her, was not the mere love of noisy excitement, which leads persons to hurry to the spot where any disturbance is going on; to him the news of "civil commotions" was "melancholy intelligence;" and though he could not take his pleasure now, yet he waited calmly till there appeared to be real want of the kind of work which he could best do for his country.

He stayed some while longer in Rome, and again visited Florence. The truthfulness of his life was shown in his conduct while he was abroad, for instead of giving in to the evil which he found around him because he was away from those who knew him at home, he says: "In all the places in which vice meets with so little discouragement, and is protected with so little shame, I never once turned from the

path of integrity and virtue, and perpetually reflected that, though my conduct might escape the notice of men, it could not elude the inspection of God." And there is no doubt that he often had in his mind his own lines at the close of "Comus"—

> "Or if virtue feeble were,
> Heaven itself would stoop to her;'

for he wrote these two lines while in Italy under his name in the album of an Italian nobleman. He was as faithful and straightforward in the expression of his religious opinions as in his conduct. "I laid it down as a rule for myself," he says, "never to begin a conversation on religion in these places, but if any one asked me concerning my faith, to dissemble nothing, whatever might be the consequences. Thus, if attacked, I defended in the most open manner the reformed faith for nearly two months in the city even of the Sovereign Pontiff."

In July or August, 1639, Milton came home. A great grief now filled his heart, for while he was absent his friend Charles Diodati died, so that he never saw him again. He expressed his sorrow in a Latin pastoral, which he called "Damon's Epitaph." The death of Diodati took from Milton the friend to whom he could speak of his higher aspirations and deeper feelings. He says, "We scarce in thousands meet one kindred mind;" and however much he may have loved many others, he could not hope to find in all complete understanding and sympathy; the death of Diodati was therefore for him "a wound that nothing heals." At the same time we find that Milton did not ask for perfect sympathy in order to love deeply and tenderly those with whom he lived; for to live apart from others, because they cannot give us all we ask, is the mark of an inferior rather than of a great nature.

On Milton's return he found some changes in his family.

His father had given up the house at Horton, and had gone to live with his son Christopher at Reading. His sister, Mrs. Phillips, who had been a widow, was now married again. Milton had come home to serve his country, and he must be near the scene of action; he therefore went to London. Here he took lodgings, and had his two nephews, Edward and John Phillips, to live with him; but soon after he moved into "a pretty garden house," or a house standing in the midst of a walled garden. Here, in addition to his nephews, he took other pupils, and gave himself earnestly to the work of education. In the meantime the great hope of his life, which he had cherished in all his study, reading, observation, and travel, was still unfulfilled, and he yet kept before him the high desire of writing a poem worthy of a place in English literature, and such as would keep its place in time to come, and raise and strengthen the souls of men through many generations. He had thought of subjects for his poem, amongst them King Arthur—that undying ideal, which was to rise to new life whenever England needed him; but this was not what England wanted just then, for the minds of the people were too much concerned in special questions belonging to the time itself to give heed to any complete ideal, which must include all sides. There was warm discussion going on respecting the government of the Church; the liberty of persons to worship God according to the dictates of conscience; the divine right of the king to govern as he chose; and the privileges of the English nation, as declared in Magna Charta and other laws. Anything written on these subjects by a man of large intellect, wide culture, and trained reasoning powers, would be listened to eagerly, and might be of utmost value to future generations in guiding the nation through the dangers of the time into well-founded order and liberty. Milton's dream of immortality was not of endless fame, but of deathless service; and

he now set aside his cherished hope of writing an enduring poem, the labour of which would have been to him such joy and delight as only a poet can know, and took up his pen instead to write, as he says, "with his *left hand*," short pamphlets, or letters, on any question arising out of the events of the time. This seemed to him to be his present duty, and he gave himself heartily to it. The value of Milton's writings lay in the fact that they were not written to support a party, but were his own honest judgment as to what was right and best; thus, we shall see, he sometimes differed from those with whom he worked at other times, and thus he was able to check wrong-doing wherever he saw it.

The first prose writings of Milton were five pamphlets on Church government. These were published in the years 1641 and 1642. They expressed his own ideas and convictions in regard to the best methods for carrying on rule and order in the Church, and answered objections which were brought forward against his opinions.

In 1642 the adherents of the king left the Parliament, and in August of that year the first act of the civil war was begun by Charles raising his standard at Nottingham. In October the first battle between the King and the Parliament was fought at Edgehill. The king then made Oxford his head-quarters, while London continued throughout the war to be the head-quarters of the Parliament. In the next year Reading was besieged by the Parliament, and after ten days surrendered. Christopher Milton, who took the side of the king in the national struggle, left Reading, and the father came up to London to live with John Milton. There were then in Milton's house his nephews, his pupils, and his old father, who "passed most of his time in rest or in devotion." In such a household there was need of a mistress, and Milton must have felt the want besides of nearer companionship and sympathy for himself, as well as of care for his old father, more loving and tender than might be given

by servants. It was at this time that Milton married Mary Powell, the daughter of a country gentleman in Oxfordshire. The Powells were old friends of the Miltons, and some years before Mr. Powell had borrowed £500 of Milton. They lived at Forest Hill, about three or four miles from Oxford, where the king now held his court, and which was the head-quarters of the Royalist army. Mr. Powell was just one of those "easy-hearted men" whom Comus said he "led into snares" with "plausible reasoning." He liked to enjoy life, and he seems to have brought up his family to think first of what was pleasant. He spent more than he had, kept open house for visitors, and no doubt the Cavaliers from Oxford often rode over to Forest Hill; and there was much merriment and gay enjoyment going on there at this time. Milton's nature was always genial, even in later life in the midst of trouble and suffering, and, when as a younger man he paid occasional visits to Forest Hill, he would feel no disposition to hold aloof from any amusement going on, but no doubt took his part in the fun with a hearty holiday enjoyment of it, which, perhaps, gave the idea that he, too, made pleasure an object in life. He saw in Mary Powell a quiet modesty of manner which made him believe her to be ready to rise to earnestness as soon as duty came before her. Thus there was mutual love and expectation of happiness, when at Whitsuntide, June, 1643, Milton and Mary Powell were married. A few weeks after he brought his wife home to his house in London, hoping that he had found just what was wanting to complete the joy of his life, and the comfort and order of his large household. His short holiday was now over, and he had to take up again the serious busy work of his life, the teaching and training of his pupils, his own further study and preparation for yet greater service, and the watchful attention to public events, so that he might be ready to strike in with his knowledge and skilful reasoning at the right moment. Mary Milton was only eighteen,

and she had been accustomed to see life regarded as meant for pleasure and amusement; she had shared in the strong feeling of the Royalists against the Parliament and the Puritans; she felt no interest in Milton's earnest life, and could not at once understand the nobleness of his self-denial. She knew that she was very dull, and that it was much merrier at home; so when she had been married little more than a month, she went to pay a visit to Forest Hill with the understanding that she was to return at Michaelmas. As soon, however, as she began again the easy, merry life in her father's house, she expressed a great dislike to going back to London; and her father and mother, who all their lives had consulted their own ease and pleasure more than duty, declared she should stay at home. The king's party, too, at that time seemed likely to win in the national struggle, and then disgrace and punishment would fall on those who, like Milton, supported the Parliament. Milton's wife, therefore, stayed on at her father's house, refusing again and again to return to her husband. We can imagine the grief and disappointment this would cause to him, for he loved her still, as we shall see; but it was not a trial affecting himself alone: his household, his old father, his pupils, all suffered for want of that attention and care which he hoped he had provided for them in his wife. A year and a half passed by, and still she did not return; Milton's thoughts were then turned to the idea of whether it would not be better that a marriage like that should be set aside by the law, and he wrote some pamphlets on the subject. In the meantime the cause of the king was now daily losing ground. The Parliament gained a great victory at Marston Moor, and a greater still at Naseby; the Royalists lost hope, and no longer looked forward to the defeat of the Puritan party. Mr. Powell's affairs were on the verge of ruin, and he began to regret the way in which he had kept his daughter from going back to her husband.

One evening, not long after the battle of Naseby, Milton went to call on a relation, a Mr. Blackborough, who lived in London. He was shown into a room which opened into another; and what was his astonishment to see the door of the inner room open and his wife come in. She was deeply sorry for all that had passed, and begged for forgiveness, which Milton gave her immediately. He took her home; and there is no reason to doubt but that they lived together from this time in love and happiness. The breaking up of her home and all its gay doings made her feel, perhaps, how much more beautiful was the life of her husband, rich in love and duty and self-denying service, and bright with a joy that could not pass away.

Soon after this Milton also took into his house his wife's father and mother, while he busied himself in getting Mr. Powell's affairs into order. During the time that his wife was away Milton had written one of the noblest of his prose works. The Long Parliament, which had hitherto had the support of Milton's intellect and writing, now proposed to make an order for the regulating of printing. By a decree of the Star Chamber, no books had been allowed to be printed that had not been approved by the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Bishop of London. The Star Chamber was now done away with, and the power of the bishops limited, but the Parliament proposed to continue this decree, and to appoint a Committee of the House of Commons to examine all books, and grant permission, or not, for them to be published. Milton saw that the effect of this would be to destroy the very life of our literature; so he wrote a pamphlet which he called "Areopagitica." The highest court at Athens was called the Areopagus, and Milton meant, by the name he gave his book, things concerning the Areopagus, or Highest Court, that is, the Parliament; and he also called his pamphlet "A Speech to the Parliament of England for the Liberty of Unlicensed Printing."

It was Milton's courageous love of Truth which produced this book, and this is the spirit which runs through every page, and gives life to its eloquent words. But by Truth Milton did not understand a love of his own opinions; his idea of Truth was so much beyond this, that he thought neither he nor any man could find the whole of Truth, nor could any one generation of men. "Truth indeed," he says, "came once into the world with her Divine Master; but when He ascended, and His apostles after Him were laid asleep, then strait arose a wicked race of deceivers, who took Truth and hewed her lovely form into a thousand pieces, and scattered them to the winds. From that time ever since the sad friends of Truth, such as durst appear, went up and down gathering up limb by limb still as they could find them. We have not yet found them all, Lords and Commons, nor ever shall do, till her Master's second coming; He shall bring together every joint and member, and shall mould them into an immortal feature of loveliness and perfection. Suffer not these licensing prohibitions to stand at every place of opportunity, forbidding and disturbing them that continue seeking the torn body of our martyred saint." Milton thus urges that even the humblest and meanest, to whom God may have granted the honour of finding the smallest part of Truth, may not have their mouths stopped by a committee, many of whom may fail to recognise a new part of Truth they had not seen before; and in reply to the objection—that to give free voice to Truth is to give free voice also to all kinds of error, Milton answers with the firmest faith in God and in the divine might of Truth—"Though all the winds of doctrine were let loose upon the earth, so Truth be in the field, we do injuriously by licensing and prohibiting to misdoubt her strength. Let her and Falsehood grapple; who ever knew Truth put to the worse in a free and open encounter? Her confuting is the best and surest suppressing. For who knows not that

Truth is strong next to the Almighty? she needs no policies, no stratagems, no licensings to make her victorious; those are the shifts and defences that Error uses against her power."

And then Milton goes on to show how Error at all times, from very fear of the superior power of Truth, has resorted to such means as stopping the printing of books containing anything against her. And he shows further what the effect of this examination and licensing of books would have upon the literature and upon the nation. It would, on the one hand, take away from the author himself the sense of responsibility, which he would throw off upon the licensers, and he would no longer have care, as in the sight of God, to write nothing false or wrong; on the other hand, he would be cramped in the utterance of what he believed to be true and right, by the fear of whether it would agree with the views of the licensers. But Milton felt even more keenly what wrong might be done by a committee of licensers to the works of authors no longer living, how they might thus "gnaw out the choicest periods of exquisitest books, and commit a treacherous fraud against the orphan remainders of worthiest men after death." "A good book," he says, "is the precious life-blood of a master spirit, embalmed and treasured up on purpose to a life beyond life," and to injure or suppress such a book is to "slay an immortality rather than a life," for it is to destroy that living food, for the want of which whole nations shall for ages "fare the worse." As regards the English nation, Milton said that he could not think so lightly of such a people as to suppose they would prefer error to truth, wrong to right, and must be treated as children, and have their books given to them; that it was not the way God treated the people, because while "commanding temperance and justice," He left it in the power of the people to practise these or not, "by the profusion of all His gifts;" that it

showed a want of trust in their Christian teachers to believe that "every new pamphlet would stagger them out of their Christian walking." But above all no book could do so much harm to the people as would be done if the licensers took from them the exercise of their moral sense, and their power of distinguishing between truth and error, for if this were left entirely to the licensers the people would grow dull and indolent, no longer striving earnestly to find out the truth and the right, as the English people had always done ever since the earliest times.

Though the "Areopagitica" was called forth by a Parliamentary measure of the time, it expresses as much as any of Milton's writings the character of his mind, its elevation, sincerity, strength and tenderness, its freedom, joined with a constant subjection to duty; and the work is founded on the great principle of all Milton's life—that it is Love which must bind men together in fellowship and goodwill, and not oneness in opinion.

The next work which Milton wrote at this time was a short tract on Education, in which he expresses his views as to the nature of a true education, which should include the development and training of every faculty to its highest standard. After this Milton wrote no more pamphlets during the civil wars. In 1645 he moved into a larger house in the Barbican; and here two of his little girls were born, and his father died.

The trial and execution of King Charles I. in 1649 was an event which startled England and Europe. The majority of the English people were opposed to it; it appeared to them more as an act of vengeance on a fallen foe, while to the king's own party it seemed like taking the life, above all others, most sacred in the eyes of God. In answer to both, Milton wrote "The Tenure of Kings and Magistrates," desiring to clearly explain, what was really the central truth of the national struggle—viz., that all persons

to whom ruling power is given, have it in order that they may carry out the laws and maintain them, but not that they may be above the laws and set them aside at will. If they did this, the people, for whom the laws are made, might call them to account as false to their trust.

This was the argument which Milton again maintained in a Latin book, written for Europe, as the former was for England. One of the most learned men of Europe, Salmasius, a Frenchman, wrote a book, soon after the death of Charles I., accusing England of the murder of her king, and calling on her to answer for it before the other nations of Europe. Milton's reply to this was called "Defensio pro Populo Anglicano," or "Defence of the People of England." Milton wrote this book at the request of the Council of State, and out of the love he had ever borne for his country, and the intense sympathy he had for her in all the late trials and struggles through which England had passed. How strong that love was, sacrifices beyond all words make known to us. He had given up the cherished hope of his life to serve "with his left hand" the cause of the English people; and now he gave up, for the defence of the nation, the last hope of preserving his sight. His health was bad, and the sight of his left eye was gone, when he was asked to write the "Defensio;" and he was told by the doctor that, if he attempted it, it would cost him the sight of the other eye, and leave him in total darkness. We can scarcely realise what this implies for any one; but for a poet, to whom the sight of beautiful things is as necessary food for his imagination, and for a student who gained his knowledge and held communion with other great minds by reading, the loss of sight would be almost like giving up half his life. But Milton did not hesitate; he wrote the Defence of the English people, and was for the rest of his life totally blind.

There was a cry raised that Milton had lost his sight as a judgment from God, because he had defended the

sentence of the English people on their king. To this Milton replies in his second Defence of the English people —a book written in answer to two other works which had appeared on the Continent. "To be blind is not miserable, but not to be able to bear blindness, that is miserable indeed. I neither believe, nor have found that God is angry—nay, in things of the greatest moment I have experienced and acknowledge His great mercy and His fatherly goodness towards me. I acquiesce in His Divine will, for it is He Himself who comforts and upholds my spirit, being ever more mindful of what He shall give me than of what He shall take from me. Neither am I concerned at being classed with the blind, the miserable, the weak, since there is a hope that on this account I have a nearer claim to the mercy and protection of the Sovereign Father. There is a way—and the Apostle is my authority—through weakness to the greatest strength. May I be one of the weakest, provided only in my weakness that immortal and better vigour be put forth with greater effect—provided only in my darkness the light of the Divine countenance does but more brightly shine, for then shall I at once be weakest and most mighty—shall be at once blind and of the most piercing sight." Then, speaking further of the care of God over the blind, he says that it does not seem as though the light of this world had been taken from him, but rather as though it had been shut out, by his being gathered more closely under the overshadowing heavenly wings.

Between the publication of Milton's first and second Defence of the English people a great sorrow had fallen on him, caused by the death of his wife. Nothing seems to have disturbed the love and happiness of their lives since the time when Milton took his wife home again, after her return from her father's; and Mr. and Mrs. Powell lived for some time in Milton's house. Now, by his help, they had gained possession again of Forest Hill, and

returned there. When Milton's wife died he was left alone with three little girls, and one of them a baby only a few days old. Soon after this Milton was appointed Foreign Secretary to the Commonwealth, at the head of which was Cromwell as Protector. He was assisted by a young poet, Andrew Marvell, who no doubt did all that Milton's blindness prevented him from attending to.

About four years after the death of his first wife, Milton married his second wife, Catherine, daughter of Captain Woodcock, of Hackney. He never saw her, but he could see and feel the beauty of her mind, and all her sweetness and goodness, and these called forth his deepest love. They had only been married one year, when she and her little baby both died. One night he dreamed that she came back to him, her face, which he had never seen, covered with a veil; when as she bent towards him, he awoke, to remember that she was gone, and every day to him was darkest night. After this he wrote his sonnet "On his Deceased Wife"—

> "Methought I saw my late espoused saint
> Brought to me, like Alcestis, from the grave—
> And such as yet once more I trust to have
> Full sight of her in heaven without restraint—
> Came vested all in white, pure as her mind;
> Her face was veiled, yet, to my fancied sight,
> Love, sweetness, goodness, in her person shined
> So clear, as in no face with more delight;
> But, oh, as to embrace me she inclined,
> I waked, she fled, and day brought back my night."

Cromwell died in 1658, and was succeeded by his son Richard in the Protectorate. His weak rule was followed by the breaking up of the Commonwealth, and the idea of restoring the throne to the Stuarts gained ground. Milton then wrote three pamphlets on what seemed to him to be the dangers of the time. He wished to save his country from the personal rule of a single governor, and

proposed a parliament of the best men, each to be elected for a term of years, in whose hands the rule was to rest; as any place fell vacant another member was to be elected. These were the last political writings of Milton. His life is divided into three distinct periods: the first being the years spent in education, travel, and study; the second, the period when he strove to serve his country by his political writings; the third, the time of poverty, neglect, and suffering, when he wrote his greatest poems, and achieved the grand hope of his life.

When Charles II. came to the throne, 1660, Milton was for a while in danger, from the help he had given to the Commonwealth by his writings; but with the exception of a short imprisonment, no further proceedings were taken against him, though the "Defence of the People of England" was ordered to be burnt by the hangman. In 1662 he took a small house in Bunhill Fields, which for the rest of his life was his home. He had with him his three motherless girls, the youngest only ten, and he was blind, and often helpless from attacks of gout. It was about this time that he married his third wife, Elizabeth Minshull. Milton's manner of life during these years was simple and earnest; and though he had to bear pain and loss of sight, and "reproach, far worse to bear than violence," yet there is no murmer of discontent or shade of bitterness in all his writing, but rather the evidence of that deep, calm joy which comes from steadfast faith and rest in God, and which made him able to take with cheerful pleasure every enjoyment which life could give to him. He used to get up about four or five in the morning, and as soon as he was ready, a chapter in the Hebrew Bible was read to him, after which he spent the time till seven in quiet, holy thought, and communion with God. When breakfast was over, he either dictated to some one who wrote for him, or listened to reading until twelve. Any one would, of course, be

glad to supply to Milton the loss of sight in his studies and work, and there were two or three friends, especially Elwood, a young Quaker, who were only too happy to be so employed. His daughters also learnt to read Latin, Greek, and Hebrew to him, without understanding the languages themselves; but this need not have been an unintelligent occupation, for Milton seems to have been in the habit of translating and talking over any passages of interest or beauty with his readers; and Milton's rendering of a passage must have been more full of intelligence and expression, and have conveyed more of the thought and feeling of the writer, than any translation that three girls would be likely to make for themselves even after some years of study. There was much also which Milton needed to have read to him for his work, which would have no interest apart from his purpose, even if his daughters had perfectly understood the language in which it was written. Their love for their father would also in itself have forbidden their looking upon this occupation as in any way a hardship. Milton did not, however, keep them constantly engaged in reading to him, though he was forced to be dependent on the sight of others for carrying on his great work; he had his daughters taught the art of embroidery in silk and gold, an art then much in demand for dress and decorations of various kinds, and by the exercise of which they might earn a good livelihood. Milton's daily plan was to work from eight till twelve, and then he walked in the garden till one, which was the dinner hour. After dinner he played on the organ and sang, or his wife sang to him, for he always loved music. Then he set to work again with any one who would supply the loss of sight to him. At six o'clock he laid aside his work and gave himself up to the enjoyment of pleasant talk with his family, or with any friends who might come in. At eight he had a light supper, and soon after went to bed.

Such were Milton's days during the third period of his life, and now we must try to see what was his work. As early as 1655 he had probably begun to arrange his plan for writing the great poem which had so long been the hope and dream of his life; but it was during the early years of Charles II.'s reign, when he was living quietly in the small house near Bunhill Fields, that he was able to complete it. He had fixed on the grandest subject that it is possible for the mind of man to work upon—"to assert eternal Providence, and justify the ways of God to men." We know how many puzzles there are in the world around us. We constantly ask ourselves, why should God let people be so wicked? Why should the innocent suffer, and the guilty go free? Why should dreadful diseases, death, disappointments, and separations, hunger, cold, and accidents, make people so miserable? There is but one answer, which most of us can give, and that is that God is love, and He knows all about it, and we may perfectly trust that all is right; but in almost every age there rises one man who can see further than the rest, and who not only believes but can assure us from his higher point of view that there is true purpose in all that which seems so puzzling and confused. It is this which our greatest poets do for us—Chaucer, in his day; then Shakespeare; now Milton; and, in our own time, Wordsworth; and all these great poets—whose eyes are not fixed on one view of things only, but "glance from heaven to earth, from earth to heaven"—answer the questions and doubts of their times with a new assurance that everything is working in perfect order towards the highest and noblest ends.

We have seen throughout Milton's life that the strong conviction of his soul was always—that obedience to the laws of God was the foundation of a true and happy life. He saw that God's laws were made that man might live the best life possible in this world, and that misery and suffering

came as the consequence of breaking them. But there were many persons in Milton's day who asked, Why did not God make man so that he could not disobey Him? And why, if God foresaw all things, did He not prevent Adam's fall? These were questions which could not be answered by any narrrow view of things; and in Milton's poem, "Paradise Lost," we shall find that he looks "from heaven to earth, from earth to heaven," far back into the past, and on into the future, taking into his view all that a man can take, and from this highest point of vision he sees how from the evil "good shall spring; to God more glory, more goodwill to men from God." Milton called his poem "Paradise Lost," because the story of the temptation and fall of Adam and Eve was to form the main incident of the poem; but God's continued love to man and his restoration to obedience through Christ is always kept in view, and is the "great argument" by which he "justifies the ways of God to men."

The poem is an epic, a form of poem which is constructed on a certain plan. An epic must have one single, great subject always kept well in view. It must open in the midst of the action, so as to show us at once the grand things that are going on; but some explanation will be required as to what brought about this state of things, and that is given later in the poem by the episode, in which we are told what happened before the point at which the poem begins. An event cannot be great which has not grand results, so the consequences, reaching far onward into the future, have also to be set before us in some part of the poem. Milton begins his poem, as the great classic writers did, with an invocation; but this is no mere form: out of a sense of his own feebleness in comparison with the greatness of his subject, Milton utters a true prayer for help to the Holy Spirit—

"What in me is dark,
Illumine; what is low, raise and support;

That to the height of this great argument
I may assert Eternal Providence,
And justify the ways of God to men."

Then the action of the poem opens "in the midst of things," and the grand and terrible sight is shown us of the angels, fallen from heaven, lying thunderstruck and confounded on the lake of fire—

"A dungeon horrible, on all sides round,
As one great furnace, flamed; yet from those flames
No light; but rather darkness visible
Served only to discover sights of woe,
Regions of sorrow, doleful shades, where peace
And rest can never dwell; hope never comes."

Satan, the leader of the revolt against God in heaven, is the first to recover; he lifts his head and sees near him Beëlzebub, the "next to him in power and crime." Satan speaks to him, and his first words show the strength of his pride and his fierce hatred of God's rule. In this speech, as in all others of Satan to the fallen spirits, there is a sound of heroic resolution, such as might stir others to sympathy and action, for without this he could not be the grand seducer of angels and of men; but Milton shows the hollowness of it by letting us see him at other times speaking to himself, and then we find all courage and fortitude are gone, and that, while "vaunting aloud," he is really "wracked with deep despair." We also see that in the depths of his character the meanest passions are at work, envy at justly-merited greatness, hatred of goodness and love, and willingness to use the lowest means of craft and fraud to accomplish the most cruel and ignoble ends. At the same time Milton keeps before us the idea of Satan's former greatness in his intense energy, in his intellectual and physical strength, in the dimly-shadowed vastness of his figure, and in occasional gleams of remorse. He is an

archangel in moral revolt against God. His first action is to rouse the fallen spirits around him to consult whether they shall carry on open war against God, or seek by underhand means to frustrate His designs. At the sound of his voice, they spring up from the fiery deep, an innumerable host of—

> "God-like shapes, and forms
> Excelling human; princely dignities;
> And powers that erst in heaven sat on thrones,
> Though of their names in heavenly records now
> Be no memorial; blotted out and rased
> By their rebellion from the book of life."

But Milton gives the leaders among the evil spirits the names of false gods, by which he supposes them to have been known later among men.

Satan reviews them, as they form into ranks before him; and as he sees their ruined glory the angel-nature rises for a moment in him, and thrice he tried to speak, "And thrice tears, such as angels weep, burst forth." At last he tells them that open war is hopeless now; they can only "work in close design, by fraud or guile, what force effected not;" and he reminds them of the fame in heaven of the new world which God was about to create, and suggests that they shall endeavour to find it, and shall there still carry on war against God—

> "For who can think submission? War then, war,
> Open or understood, must be resolved."

The mighty host in response draw their swords and holding their shields on high, clash defiance towards God in heaven. Council is then to be held as to the course to be pursued; and the fallen angels—led on by Mammon, "the least erected spirit that fell," whose eyes in heaven were bent in admiration of the golden pavement, rather than raised to God—build in an hour a splendid palace rich in

artistic decoration, all the materials for which they find in the soil of hell; for the glory of heaven is its love and obedience and the light of God, and the horror of hell is its revolt against God, and not the want of riches, gold, and artistic skill.

In a magnificent hall of this palace the council is held; the leaders among the fallen angels sit on golden thrones in their own vast forms, but in order to make room for the thousands of inferior spirits that swarm like bees around the palace gates, these reduce their size to that of fairies, and thus they all find a place in the hall.

The second book of the poem begins with the counsel given by the different fallen spirits as to the best way of carrying on the war against God. In the end it is decided that Satan shall undertake to find the new world, and then they will either take possession of the earth, and drive out its inhabitants, or seduce them to their side, so as to make God the foe of man. The council is then broken up, and the evil spirits betake themselves to various employments in order to pass the time till Satan's return. Some amuse themselves with feats of arms and various exercises, others "retreated in a silent valley," sing "to many a harp their own heroic deeds," and complain that fate should have gone against them in the fortune of war. Others "sat on a hill retired," and with intellectual eloquence, reason of free-will, fore-knowledge of good and evil, happiness and misery—

> "Passion and apathy, glory and shame,
> Vain wisdom all, and false philosophy;
> Yet with a pleasing sorcery could charm
> Pain for a while, or anguish, and excite
> Fallacious hope, or arm the obdurate breast
> With stubborn patience, as with triple steel."

Another party set out to explore that "dismal world," but find no happier clime, no rest, only "a universe of death."

Satan meanwhile flies towards the gates of hell; these are guarded by two horrible shapes, Sin and Death. Sin had sprung from the head of Satan at the time when first the desire to oppose God came into his mind, and Death was her son. Milton follows here the thought of St. James, that evil desire produces sin, and sin produces death. When they hear where Satan is bound they open the gates, and Satan passes out into the realm of chaos, where there is no law, order, or ruler. Everything here is in tumult and confusion, "endless wars," and "universal hubbub wild of stunning sounds and voices all confused." Milton here represents the utter disorder of a world without any one governing mind to see all things and plan just laws for general good.

Satan makes his way into the thickest of the tumult, where he finds the throne of Chaos, with dark Night beside him as his queen. He does not rule, for he cannot see all things, and by his decisions "more embroils the fray." Beside him stands "Rumour, Chance, Tumult, and Confusion, and Discord with a thousand various mouths." Satan inquires the way to the new world, and on promising to restore it to the realm of darkness and disorder, he is told where to find it. Meanwhile Sin and Death have followed him, and "paved after him a broad and beaten way over the dark abyss" reaching from hell to earth. A gleam of light at length reaches Satan from the battlements of heaven, and he sees high above him the walls and towers of the celestial city, and hanging in a golden chain "this world, close by the moon." Satan has now found the object of his journey; but before Milton lets him touch the earth he takes us to heaven that we may see how God does know beforehand what will happen, and why He takes no means to prevent Adam and Eve from falling by Satan's temptations.

The third book opens in the glory of the light of

heaven; and Milton, rejoicing in this passing from the darkness and disorder of hell and chaos into the clear light and harmony of the world, where God is perfectly obeyed, sings of the pure, sweet glory of light; then he remembers that never again will its beams visit his eyes:—

> "Seasons return, but not to me returns
> Day, or the sweet approach of eve or morn,
> Or sight of vernal bloom, or summer's rose,
> Or flocks, or herds, or human face divine."

But the outward eye is not the whole of man's sight, nor is material light all the illumination that can shine upon him; and Milton prays in his blindness:—

> "So much the rather thou, Celestial Light,
> Shine inward, and the mind through all her powers
> Irradiate; there plant eyes; all mist from thence
> Purge and disperse, that I may see and tell
> Of things invisible to mortal sight."

It is at this point of the poem that Milton gives direct answer to the questionings of the time, as to whether God foresees all that passes on earth, and if so, why He does not prevent evil? Here Milton rises in lofty imagination to heaven; and he hears the voice of God, the Almighty Father, speaking to His Son. God has seen Satan winging his way towards the new-created world. He knows his designs, and He knows that man will fall by them; man had been made free to disobey, for unless he were free there could be no such thing as obedience; if man kept God's laws because he could not break them, it would be no obedience, but only unreasoning, unloving necessity. The voice of God says:—

> "I made him just and right,
> Sufficient to have stood, though free to fall.
> Such I created all the ethereal Powers
> And Spirits, both them who stood and them who failed;

Freely they stood who stood, and fell who fell.
Not free, what proof could they have given sincere
Of true allegiance, constant faith, or love,
Where only what they needs must do appeared,
Not what they would? What praise could they receive?
What pleasure I from such obedience paid?
When will and reason (reason also is choice)
Useless and vain, of freedom both despoiled,
Made passive both, had served necessity,
Not me?"

Man being thus made free to render loving obedience, he could not be prevented from sinning; but Milton "justifies the ways of God to men," by showing that God's plan of working is not to prevent evil, but to turn it to greater good, and this is the keynote of "Paradise Lost." So now, before Satan has reached the earth, Christ the Son of God offers to become one of the race about to fall, to raise man again to obedience, and to atone for sin by His own suffering and death; and God, the Almighty Father, is willing that sin shall thus lead to the greater manifestation of Divine love, and the more sublime victory over evil—

"So man, as is most just,
Shall satisfy for man, be judged and die,
And dying rise, and rising with Him, raise
His brethren, ransomed with His own dear life.
So heavenly love shall outdo hellish hate,
Giving to death, and dying to redeem,
So dearly to redeem, what hellish hate
So easily destroyed."

Then all the angels of heaven sing for joy at this new proof of God's infinite wisdom and love, and of the depth of love and goodness in Christ the Son. Thus before "Paradise" is lost the paradise within of forgiveness and restoration to obedience is regained for man in Christ.

We can now follow Satan in his journey to earth. Milton takes the old idea, that the earth is the centre of an immense

sphere in which the sun and stars are placed, and it is on the outside of this sphere that Satan first alights. It is a huge, trackless, windy waste, to which afterwards, Milton supposes, all the vain, hollow, false things of earth fly up. A gleam of light leads Satan to an opening in this outside shell, through which the stairs from heaven, such as Jacob saw in his dream, pass down to earth. He looks down through this opening, and sees the earth and stars, and "above them all the golden sun in splendour likest heaven." He flies towards it, and in the sun he sees a glorious angel, whose back is turned towards him. Immediately Satan changes his form into that of a young cherub; and when the angel turns, Satan sees that it is Uriel, the great Archangel. He does not recognise Satan, for angels cannot imagine such a thing as hypocrisy, and, good themselves, are incapable of suspecting evil. So when Satan tells him he wants to see the new world, that he may glorify God by the sight of His works, Uriel shows him directly the way to earth, and points out Paradise to him.

The fourth book opens with Satan standing on Mount Niphates, in view of Eden. The sun is shining down gloriously upon the fresh beauty of the new-made earth. But Satan, out of harmony with all the works and laws of God, is tossed with passion, and full of dark despair—

> "For within him hell
> He brings, and round about him; nor from hell
> One step no more than from himself can fly
> By change of place."

Milton thus keeps constantly before us the truth that paradise and hell are not mere outward beauty, or outward horrors; but inward love and obedience, or inward hate and revolt. The strain of heroic resolution with which Satan addressed the fallen spirits is now shown to be mere "vaunting aloud;" there is no inward fortitude, such as supports

the hero of a righteous but defeated cause; on the other hand, he acknowledges to himself—

> "That pride and worse ambition threw me down,
> Warring in heaven against heaven's matchless King:
> Ah, wherefore? He deserved no such return
> From me, whom He created what I was
> In that bright eminence, and with His good
> Upbraided none; nor was His service hard."

Then Satan wishes he had been made an inferior angel, whom ambition would not have tempted; but he remembers that many as great as himself in heaven fell not, but stand unshaken by temptation, and he asks himself—

> "Hadst thou the same free will and power to stand?
> Thou hadst. Whom hast thou then or what t' accuse
> But Heaven's free love dealt equally to all?
> Be then His love accursed, since love or hate
> To me alike it deals eternal woe.
> Nay, cursed be thou! since 'gainst His, thy will
> Chose freely what it now so justly rues."

In the intensity of his misery he says: "Which way I fly is hell, myself am hell;" and he begins even to consider whether there is any place yet left for repentance and pardon, but he knows there can be none but by submission, and from this he is kept back by disdain, and his dread of shame among the other spirits—

> "Whom I seduced
> With other promises and other vaunts
> Than to submit, boasting I could subdue
> Th' Omnipotent. Ay me, they little know
> How dearly I abide that boast so vain,
> Under what torments inwardly I groan,
> While they adore me on the throne of hell."

A return to obedience is thus rejected by Satan, and he deliberately chooses evil—

> "All good to me is lost;
> Evil, be thou my good;"

and decides, through evil, to carry on eternal war against God. Milton here "justifies the ways of God" to fallen spirits by showing that their misery is the alternative chosen by themselves, and not inflicted on them as an endless punishment for a single act.

Satan now reflects that he was here showing all the evil feelings within him in his face, and they have, in fact, been seen by Uriel, so he smoothes his features with outward calm, and thus "was the first that practised falsehood under saintly show." He then approaches Paradise, which stands on a hill surrounded by a thick growth of wood. This, at one bound, he overleaps, and flies upon the tree of life, where he "sits like a cormorant." Here he sees "undelighted all delight," all the loveliness of Paradise, sloping lawns and shady valleys, lakes and fountains, pleasant groves and orchards, "flowers of all hues, and without thorn the rose." It is evening; and "under a tuft of shade that on a green stood whispering soft by a fresh fountain side," Adam and Eve are sitting, after the work of the day, taking their evening meal of fruits. Before them "frisking played all beasts of the earth." A gleam of pity shines forth for an instant as Satan sees the happiness of all; but he casts it from him, and changing himself into the form of one animal after another, he comes near enough to Adam and Eve to hear their conversation. Adam is speaking of how good God is, and of all that He has given them, only keeping them from the fruit of the forbidden tree, which it is "death to taste." Satan, as he hears this, at once sees how he can tempt them to disobey God; and when Adam and Eve have gone to sleep, he takes the form of a toad, and sitting at Eve's ear, he fills her mind with a dream, in which she is called forth, by what seems to her an angel, who stands before the tree and praises the fruit as able to make gods of men. He flatters Eve as a creature worthy to be a goddess, and she dreams she takes the fruit, and flies up into the skies.

Meanwhile Uriel had given notice to Gabriel, who with a guard of angels had charge of Paradise, that some evil being, in the form of the young cherub, had come down to earth, and Gabriel gives command to two angels, Ithuriel and Zephon, to search through the garden. As they come to the bower Ithuriel lightly touches the toad with his spear, "which no falsehood can endure," and the two angels start back, as Satan suddenly springs up as "the grisly king." Ithuriel and Zephon follow him through the garden, till they come to where Gabriel is on guard; and Satan would have resisted in fight the attempts of the angels to take him, but he sees hung out in heaven the golden scales, which show victory to Gabriel and defeat to him; he therefore turns and flies with the shades of night, following night round the world, and thus he is hidden in darkness for the next twenty-four hours. This closes the fourth book.

> "Now morn her rosy steps in th' eastern clime
> Advancing, sow'd the earth with orient pearl,"

and Adam and Eve rising, Eve tells Adam her dream. There is a thought of sin in the dream which distresses Eve, but Adam tells her that evil may come into the mind, but if unapproved "will leave no spot nor blame behind."

> "So cheered he his fair spouse, and she was cheered,
> But silently a gentle tear let fall
> From either eye, and wiped them with her hair.
> Two other precious drops, that ready stood
> Each in their crystal sluice, he, ere they fell,
> Kissed, as the gracious signs of sweet remorse
> And pious awe, that feared to have offended;
> So all was cleared, and to the field they haste."

But before they begin the day's work they worship God; and Adam, as the priest of Nature, offers, for all Creation, intelligent, loving praise to God in a morning hymn.

The designs of Satan being known in heaven, God sends

Raphael to spend half of this day with Adam, and give him warning of how he may fall, if he yield to temptation. At noon the angel arrives in Paradise, and Adam takes him to the bower, where Eve has arranged a meal of fruits upon a table of grassy turf, adorned with flowers. As they are taking this food, Adam begins to ask Raphael how the life of the angels is sustained in heaven; the angel replies that their life, like man's, needs nourishment, and is of the same nature as man's, "but more refined, more spirituous and pure" the nearer they are to God—as from the root springs the most delicate green stalk, then the leaves, and last —crowning life of all—the flower; and he tells Adam that in course of time man, too, may rise in the scale of being, "if he be found obedient, and retain unalterably firm his love entire."

This calls forth from Adam the question—"Can we want obedience then to God, or possibly His love desert?" And occasion is thus given to Raphael to guard Adam against temptation; and there is also the opportunity made for introducing the episode, which, in an epic poem, is to explain the state of things in the midst of which the poem begins. We must notice here how skilfully and delicately Milton passes from the noonday meal to discourse of the fall of the angels in heaven. Transitions of this kind are among the fine beauties of the poem, which cannot be given in a short sketch. The subject having been now started, Raphael explains to Adam that God had made both angels and man perfect, but free to fall, for—

> "Our voluntary service He requires,
> Not our necessitated; such with Him
> Finds no acceptance, nor can find; for how
> Can hearts not free be tried whether they serve
> Willing or no, who will but what they must
> By destiny, and can no other choose?
> Myself and all the angelic host, that stand

In sight of God enthroned, our happy state
Hold, as you yours, while our obedience holds;
On other surety none. Freely we serve,
Because we freely love, as in our will
To love or not; in this we stand or fall:
And some are fallen, to disobedience fallen,
And so from heaven to deepest hell."

Then Raphael, at Adam's request, begins to tell him of the rebellion of Satan, and the war in heaven: how Satan had been one of the greatest angels in heaven, but being determined not to acknowledge the Son of God as Head over all, he gathered around him a multitude of spirits in the "quarters of the north;" here he addressed the angels under his command, and in the same false strain of apparently heroic resolution, he seduces them by high-sounding words of freedom, equality, and scorn of obedience to law—"Who can introduce law and edict on us, who without law err not?" The whole army of spirits around him are caught by this address, excepting one only, the seraph Abdiel, who stands boldly forward on the side of God, and declares that it is God who has made them free, who is most careful of their good and of their dignity, whose laws are their laws, and that it is their greatest honour to honour Him. Satan replies with scorn and mockery; and Abdiel declares that he will leave the rebellious host.

"So spake the seraph Abdiel, faithful found
Among the faithless, faithful only he;
Among innumerable false, unmoved,
Unshaken, unseduced, unterrified,
His loyalty he kept, his love, his zeal;
Nor number, nor example, with him wrought
To swerve from Truth, or change his constant mind,
Though single. From amidst them forth he passed
Long way through hostile scorn, which he sustained
Superior, nor of violence feared aught."

Abdiel all night pursues his way across the fields of

heaven, till, with the morning dawn, he joins the faithful host of angels round the hill of God. Then from amidst a golden cloud is heard the voice of God—

> "Servant of God, well done! Well hast thou fought
> The better fight, who singly hast maintained
> Against revolted multitudes the cause
> Of Truth, in word mightier than they in arms:
> And for the testimony of Truth hast borne
> Universal reproach (far worse to bear
> Than violence); for this was all thy care
> To stand approved in sight of God, though worlds
> Judged thee perverse."

The noble character of Abdiel, and his steadfast courage in asserting what was true against the false representations of Satan, is intended by Milton to mark, by strong contrast, the distinction between a true hero, forgetting himself, and ready to endure contempt and suffering for a righteous cause, and the mock heroism of Satan, who will sacrifice everything to himself and his mean jealousy of exalted worth. Abdiel also is given as an example for Adam, in showing how even one alone can be strong to stand against temptation, and by the nobleness of a true obedience triumph over revolt.

That day the war begins, when Michael and his hosts go forth to meet the advancing army of rebel angels led by Satan. As the two armies approach each other Abdiel stands forth, and addressing Satan, says:—

> "Thou seest
> All are not of thy train; there be who faith
> Prefer, and piety to God; though then
> To thee not visible, when I alone
> Seemed in thy world erroneous to dissent
> From all! My sect thou seest, now learn too late
> How few sometimes may know, when thousands err."

To this Satan replies by mocking the faithful angels as under

"servitude" to God; and Abdiel nobly asserts the glory of true obedience—

> "Unjustly thou depravest it with the name
> Of servitude, to serve whom God ordains,
> Or Nature; God and Nature bid the same,
> When he who rules is worthiest, and excels
> Them whom he governs. This is servitude,
> To serve the unwise, or him who hath rebelled
> Against his worthier, as thine now serve thee,
> Thyself not free, but to thyself enthralled.——
> Reign thou in hell, thy kingdom; let me serve
> In heaven God ever blest, and His divine
> Behests obey, worthiest to be obeyed."

Here Milton puts into the mouth of Abdiel, the true hero, words in exact contrast to those of Satan in the first book—

> "In my choice
> To reign is worth ambition, though in hell;
> Better to reign in hell, than serve in heaven."

Abdiel strikes the first stroke for God; and the war of the first day is a conflict of spirit with spirit, individual energy and courage coming into action—

> "Each on himself relied,
> As only in his arm the moment lay . . . . . .
> Of victory."

At the close of the day—

> "The faint Satanic host
> Fled ignominious, to such evil brought
> By sin of disobedience, till that hour
> Not liable to fear, or flight, or pain."

The faithful angels, on the other hand, stand unwearied in fight, incapable of fear or pain—

> "Such high advantages their innocence
> Gave them above their foes, not to have sinned,
> Not to have disobeyed."

The war of the first day is thus a moral conflict, and Satan, seeing how utterly weak his army is against the moral strength of the obedient angels, devises in the night a new method of war by the forces of Nature. Gunpowder is made by mixing the materials found beneath the floor of heaven; and the second day's war is begun by the discharge of artillery from the front of Satan's army. Then the faithful angels root up the hills and mountains, and cast them on the rebellious host and their instruments of destruction, and the war becomes a vast conflict of matter against matter, until heaven itself seems about to be reduced to a state of chaos; but no real end or decision to the strife can be gained, or hoped for, by the merely material war. On the third day the Son of God comes forth, bringing with Him, to end the strife, the power of peace and order; for this, as Milton saw, is always the Divine method of working. At his approach "the uprooted hills retired each to his place," the discord and destruction ceased, "and with fresh flowerets hill and valley smiled," and "heaven renewed its wonted face." The chariot of the Son of God rolls forward, and before His Divine Majesty the rebel angels fly towards the crystal walls of heaven; these open before them, and "headlong *themselves they threw* down from the verge of heaven." "Nine days they fell," and "hell at last received them, and on them closed."

The position of the fallen angels in hell is thus accounted for; and Adam then asks Raphael to tell him how this world first began, and how and why it was created. The seventh book contains Raphael's account of the creation down to the first Sabbath; and in the eighth book Adam asks further questions respecting the heavenly bodies, to which Raphael replies by giving a short sketch of the Copernican system. Meanwhile Eve has risen from her seat, and gone forth among her fruits and flowers, not that she did not delight in, or was not able to understand, such

high discourse, but she preferred to hear these things from her husband, and to learn from him what she wished to know. Raphael not having been present at the creation of man, Adam tells him of his first waking to life, and of his first thoughts of God. Then he speaks of Eve, of how God made her to be his companion, of his love for her, and tender concern and care over her. And here we see why Milton contrived her absence at this time. The angel concludes the discourse with—

> "Be strong, live happy, and love; but, first of all,
> Him, whom to love is to obey; and keep
> His great command: take heed lest passion sway
> Thy judgment to do aught which, else, free-will
> Would not admit. Stand fast; to stand or fall
> Free in thine own arbitrement it lies."

Night has now returned to Paradise, and with night Satan, who has followed darkness round the world, comes back to Eden. A river flows under the hill and rises as a fountain in the garden. Up this river Satan passes, and in the form of a dark mist he comes up into Paradise and takes the form of a serpent. When day breaks, Adam and Eve come forth to their daily work in the garden, and Eve suggests that as there is so much to be done in setting everything in the garden in order, they shall work separately and pass the whole day in labour, meeting only in the evening. Adam replies that God has not so strictly ordained labour as to interfere with refreshment, whether of food or still more "of talk (food of the mind), or sweet intercourse of looks and smiles, for smiles from reason flow and are of love the food. For not to irksome toil, but to delight, He made us, and delight to reason joined." He then tells her of the danger they are exposed to from the Tempter, and says:—

> "The wife, where danger or dishonour lurks,
> Safest and seemliest by her husband stays,
> Who guards her, or with her the worst endures."

Eve is somewhat hurt at the idea that she needs care or protection from evil; she wishes to be tried that she may prove her capability of standing individually and apart from Adam. He explains to her that "not mistrust but tender love enjoins that I should mind thee oft, and mind thou me." At the same time he will not keep Eve against her will; and she leaves him, engaging to return by noon. Eve, who has made work the first object, begins at a distance from Adam her independent labour; and the Serpent, beyond his hopes, finds Eve alone. With his head erect he approaches her, and begins with flattery. Eve inquires how it is the Serpent has thus sense and voice; he tells her it is through eating the fruit of a certain tree. She asks where grows this tree, and the Serpent guides her to it. She sees it is the tree of knowledge of good and evil, and replies that God has forbidden them to eat of it. Satan asks—

> "Why, then, was this forbid? Why, but to awe;
> Why, but to keep ye low and ignorant,
> His worshippers. He knows that in the day
> Ye eat thereof, your eyes, that seem so clear,
> Yet are but dim, shall perfectly be then
> Opened and cleared, and ye shall be as gods,
> Knowing both good and evil as they know.
>
> "And what are gods, that man may not become
> As they, participating god-like food?
> The gods are first, and that advantage use
> On our belief, that all from them proceeds.
> I question it; for this fair earth I see,
> Warmed by the sun, producing every kind;
> Them—nothing."

Satan thus works on Eve's faith in God as Creator, and shakes her trust in Him; and she, wishing for the power which Satan persuades her lies in knowledge of good and evil, "forth-reaching to the fruit, she plucked—she ate."

Then she debates with herself whether she shall tell Adam or not, and for a moment she is disposed to keep the secret to herself, with the idea that she may become superior to him; but this thought she throws from her, when she remembers that she has made herself liable to death, and may be separated from him. So, gathering a bough laden with fruit, she returns to her husband. Adam is at first horror-struck, as he hears "the fatal trespass done by Eve," and from his hand "the garland, wreathed for Eve, down dropped, and all the faded roses shed." Then he determines that he too will eat the fruit and share the fate of Eve—"from thy state mine never shall be parted, bliss or woe." And, as Eve was tempted to doubt the wisdom and love of God in bidding them not to eat of the fruit, so Adam doubts the justice of God in carrying out the sentence of death upon them. Adam therefore eats also of the fruit; and all Nature trembles, the sky lowers, thunder mutters, "and some sad drops wept at completing of the mortal sin."

The effect of the sin is seen immediately. At first they fancy, in the intoxication produced by the fruit, that they feel wings already growing, and that this is the indication of their rise in the scale of being; but soon they become conscious that their innocence and peace of mind are gone, and that instead of rising by the knowledge of evil, they are fallen and degraded.

For the first time in their lives—

> "They sat them down to weep; not only tears
> Rained at their eyes, but high winds worse within
> Began to rise, high passions, anger, hate,
> Mistrust, suspicion, discord, and shook sore
> Their inward state of mind; calm region once
> And full of peace, now tossed and turbulent."

Then follows the first quarrel, in which both accuse each other as the cause of the evil which has come upon them,

"neither self-condemning." In the midst of the miserable strife the sun goes down, and "the gentler airs" usher in the evening cool.

Then "from wrath more cool," the Son of God, "mild judge and intercessor both," comes down to the garden to pass God's sentence upon man. Now for the first time Adam, with the sense of shame produced by sin, fears to come forth and greet the Son of God; and it is only after repeated calls—

> "He came, and with him Eve, more loth, tho' first
> T' offend, discountenanced both, and discomposed;
> Love was not in their looks, either to God
> Or to each other, but apparent guilt,
> And shame, and perturbation, and despair,
> Anger and obstinacy, and hate and guile."

The displeasure, the harshness, the anger, are thus shown to be on the side of those who have sinned, and is contrasted with the calm gentleness and deep love of Him whom they had sinned against, "both judge and saviour;" who, as He pronounces the sentence of death, gives at the same time the promise of His birth into the world, and the restoration of man to obedience and love through Him. Then the Son of God—

> "Disdained not to begin,
> Thenceforth the form of servant to assume,
> As when He washed His servants' feet, so now,
> As Father of His family, He clad
> Their nakedness with the skins of beasts."

Meanwhile Death and Sin, having made the road from hell to earth, enter the world, and begin their evil work among the lower creation. The animals rage against one another, devour one another, and the fierce war of Nature begins. When Adam sees the results of his transgression he is overwhelmed with despair, and passes the night on the cold ground lamenting and cursing his creation. Eve

timidly approaches him with loving words, but he turns upon her with cruel reproaches, and would drive her from him; with tender sympathy and longing to comfort him, Eve bears all his hard words, takes upon herself the full blame as the first transgressor, and says that she will with her cries—

> "Importune Heaven, that all
> The sentence, from thy head removed, may light
> On me, sole cause to thee of all this woe."

Adam is moved by her devotion, and they resolve "no more to blame each other," but strive by love "to lighten each other's burden in their share of woe."

Thus in the midst of their fall and of the miseries it has brought into the world, not only is the hope of Paradise regained set before them in the promise of forgiveness and help through the incarnation of the Son of God, but love is left to them to be the light shining through the gloom and sorrow of earthly life, love stronger and deeper even than the innocent love of Paradise, because it would gain all that love gains by common suffering, and trials that test constancy.

The first fruit of their mutual forgiveness and the return of love is the softening of their hearts in confession and repentance before God. Then Michael is sent with a band of cherubim to send them from the garden of Eden; but lest they should faint at leaving their sheltered home, and at the prospect before them, Michael is directed by God to reveal to Adam the future history of the human race, in order to show him that, though expelled from the garden of Eden, Paradise is not lost to man, "and so send them forth, tho' sorrowing, yet in peace."

There is natural sorrow on the part of Eve when the angel tells them that Eden is no longer to be their home, and she breaks into pathetic lament; but the angel comforts her in the assurance that her husband will still be with her, and that human love can stand the loss of Eden, and be

constant through the toil and trial before them; and he reminds them both that God is everywhere—

> "And will be found alike
> Present, and of His presence many a sign
> Still following thee, still compassing thee round
> With goodness and paternal love, His face
> Express, and of His steps the track divine."

Eve is then sent into a deep restful sleep, while Adam, ascending a hill, sees in vision the history of the human race down to latest time. This part of the poem answers the requirement of an epic, that the great event which forms the subject should be shown to produce the grandest future results; and still more it is essential to Milton's true purpose in the poem to—

> "Assert eternal Providence,
> And justify the ways of God to man."

Adam is first shown the evil effects of sin in the world, from the murder of Abel; but from each apparent triumph of evil there passes before him distant results, such as men can seldom see in one lifetime, and in these Adam sees how the working of God is not to prevent evil, but to bring from it good. He is also shown many a strife ending in the immediate triumph of truth and right, and thus learns that each man is a warrior fighting against evil. Paradise is then not lost to man, for in each individual soul made strong through Divine life, in trust, and love, and obedience, there is a Paradise regained—"A Paradise within, happier far," than the innocent life of unsacrificing love and untried obedience in Eden. While for the world at large the apparently greatest triumph of evil, when the Son of God was put to death, is shown to be the time when the greatest blessings were sown for the future, in the setting up of God's kingdom in the world, rising in power till the final reign of Christ—

"For then the earth
Shall be all Paradise: far happier place
Than this of Eden, and far happier days."

As Adam sees all these wonders of God's love and power, he can only exclaim—

"O goodness infinite, goodness immense!
That all this good of evil shall produce,
And evil turn to good! more wonderful
Than that which by creation first brought forth
Light out of darkness! full of doubt I stand,
Whether I should repent me now of sin,
By me done and occasioned, or rejoice
Much more, that much more good thereof shall spring,
To God more glory, more goodwill to men
From God, and over wrath grace shall abound."

Adam now sees that life for man, though under the sentence of death, is to be no mere longing to escape from its evils, no sitting down in dull indifference under them:—

"Henceforth I learn that to obey is best,
And love, with fear, the only God; to walk
As in His presence, ever to observe
His providence, and on Him sole depend,
Merciful over all His works, with good
Still overcoming evil, and by small
Accomplishing great things; by things deemed weak
Subverting worldly strong, and worldly wise
By simply meek; that suffering for truth's sake
Is fortitude to highest victory;
And, to the faithful, death, the gate of life!
Taught this by His example, whom I now
Acknowledge my Redeemer ever blest."

Eve is at length wakened, calmed and refreshed by gentle dreams; and led by the angel, they pass through the gate of Paradise.

"Some natural tears they dropped, but wiped them soon;
The world was all before them, where to choose

Their place of rest, and Providence their guide.
They, hand in hand, with wandering steps and slow,
Through Eden took their solitary way."

Thus concludes Milton's great poem, in which he does his part as a far-seeing poet to assure the world that all things are working together for the best and greatest ends. "Paradise Lost" was followed by "Paradise Regained." Milton had lent the MS. of his poem to a young Quaker friend, Thomas Ellwood, and when he had read it he returned it to him, saying, "Thou hast said much here of 'Paradise Lost,' but what hast thou to say of 'Paradise Found'?"

"Paradise Lost" could not have answered the purpose Milton intended it to do, if it did not include in it the restoration of man to God's favour and love through Christ, and that is in itself Paradise found, as Milton plainly shows, because man is brought back into obedience and love, and thus into harmony with Heaven; but Milton thought Ellwood's question implied a want of something in his great poem, so he wrote "Paradise Regained," not as a sequel or completion of "Paradise Lost," but as an addition, showing the victory of Christ over Satan, which was in itself the victory of God and man over "the great foe of God and man." The victory is the triumph of perfect trust, love, and obedience under severest tests; and stands in contrast to the fall of Adam and Eve through doubt and disobedience. The subject is the three temptations of Christ in the wilderness, including in them, as they do, all the temptations common to man; and the spirit in which every one is met, and answered, is, "Rest in the Lord, wait patiently for Him."

Milton's last great poem, "Samson Agonistes," was written to meet the special doubts and trials of faith which at this time beset the great Puritan party. Only a short while before, it had been the one strong triumphant power in England, fighting for God, for truth, for right, and liberty.

The hope was widely felt that in its success the kingdom of God was about to be set up on earth in the outward life and government of the nation. Now the Puritan party was as Samson, shorn of its strength, imprisoned and mocked; and there were many who could not then see how God was teaching the lesson that Paradise is to be within, that it is only as each individual of a nation rises in sonship with God that the nation becomes the kingdom of God, and for those who could not see, there was nothing at the time but to walk by faith and not by sight. This was all that even Milton could do, and he could only strive to inspire his comrades with the same firm, quiet trust in God which supported his own life. In "Samson Agonistes," Milton looks beyond his party, and shows that though Puritanism, like Samson, may perish, yet God still lives; the Puritans had done their work, and had only "heroically" to "finish a life heroic":—

> "Nothing is here for tears, nothing to wail
> Or knock the breast: no weakness, no contempt,
> Dispraise, or blame, nothing but well and fair,
> And what may quiet us in a death so noble."

Like Samson, they had given a death-blow to the enemies of God from which they would not soon recover, and He would carry on the war of truth and right, though they had passed away. Then in his last words as a poet, Milton calls up all the strength of faith, and without hesitation says:—

> "All is best, though we oft doubt
> What the unsearchable dispose
> Of highest wisdom brings about,
> And ever best found in the close.
> Oft He seems to hide His face,
> But unexpectedly returns,
> And to His faithful champion hath in place
> Bore witness gloriously; whence Gaza mourns,

> And all that band them to resist
> His uncontrollable intent;
> His servants He with new acquist
> Of true experience, from this great event,
> With peace and consolation hath dismist,
> And calm of mind all passion spent."

In this spirit Milton finished his work, and held fast the confidence of his young life firm unto the end. On Sunday, the 8th of November, 1674, God took him into the Paradise above, into the nearer sight of those things which he had seen afar off, and was persuaded of by faith.

CHAPTER XIV.

JEREMY TAYLOR, BUNYAN, AND BAXTER.

ALTHOUGH the seventeenth century was a time of religious contention, the strife was not, for the most part, a battle for the essential truths of Christianity against its foes, but rather a warfare of opinion amongst its followers in regard to matters of detail. There was among all parties a strong, deep faith in the essential truths of religion, and a very earnest aspiration after a holy faithful life. It was a matter of deep concern to find out the right, and, at all costs, to hold fast to it. Even in the heat of the conflict, it is impossible to shut our eyes to this, unless we are wilfully determined to misrepresent to ourselves the true spirit at work on all sides, and are seeking to exalt one party at the expense of truth. This depth of earnestness and this firm grasp of the first principles of the same religion is an immortal bond of union between those who to a mere partisan seem to be separated by a great gulf from one another; and it is this which really brings into closest relation three such writers as Jeremy Taylor in the Church, Richard Baxter the Presbyterian, and John Bunyan among the Baptist section of the Independents. In strong faith and holy aspiration they rise together above the controversies of contending sects, and leave behind them works which have an enduring life of use and preciousness for every age and every form of Christianity. We take these three great men as representing each of the religious divisions of the time, and we shall find them all three engaged in the

political conflict—Taylor a chaplain to the Royal army, Baxter chaplain to Cromwell's Ironsides, Bunyan a soldier in the Royalist army. Then we find all three suffering imprisonment—Taylor for his Church principles, under the rule of the Independents; Baxter and Bunyan for their Nonconformity, at the restoration of the Church; and in each case the time of imprisonment was a resting-time, used for writing books for the service and help of all Christians. Each left witness also that—

> "Stone walls do not a prison make,
> Nor iron bars a cage;
> Minds innocent and quiet take
> That for an hermitage."

Jeremy Taylor was the son of a barber at Cambridge. He was born in 1613. After an elementary education at the Free School, he entered Caius College as a sizar in 1626. At twenty he took his M.A. degree, and was admitted into holy orders. John Bunyan that year was a little boy five years old, playing, perhaps, with the pots and kettles which his father mended; and Richard Baxter was a lad of thirteen working hard at school.

Soon after Taylor's ordination, a college friend of his, who was Lecturer at St. Paul's, asked him to take his place for a while. Taylor went up to London, and began to preach. Very soon his natural eloquence and the peculiar beauty of his style attracted much attention. Archbishop Laud sent for him to preach before him, and was so much charmed by his sermon that he procured for him a Fellowship at All Souls', Oxford, and made him one of his chaplains. In 1637 Juxon, Bishop of London, gave Taylor the living of Uppingham. Here he married, and lived for the next five years such a life as Herbert's in his quiet country parish. Then the war broke out, and Taylor joined the Royal army at Oxford as chaplain. Of his life at this time

we know but little; he had launched on the "stormy sea of troubles" of which he afterwards speaks, for in the same year that he joined the army he lost his wife, and was deprived by the Parliament of his living. His home at Uppingham was now entirely broken up, and he followed the fortunes—or rather misfortunes—of the Royal army. In 1644 we find him in Wales, where he was taken prisoner by the Parliamentary troops—probably at the taking of Cardigan Castle. How long he remained a prisoner is not known, but the Royal cause was daily losing ground; and the next year the battle of Naseby decided the fortunes of the Royalists.

When Taylor was released he determined on remaining in Wales, for here he thought he might live in greater quietness than in England, "where," as he says, "the great storm had dashed the vessel of the Church all in pieces." He joined another clergyman, William Nicholson, afterwards Bishop of Gloucester, in opening a school. They took together a house called Newton Hall, at Llanvihangel, near Grongar Hill, in Carmarthenshire. About this time Jeremy Taylor married his second wife, who had property in Carmarthenshire, and this also may have helped to fix him in Wales.

Here Taylor found a quiet time for thought over the conflicting questions and difficulties of the day, and for meditation on the higher duties of individual life. Here he found good work to do in his school, and in instructing those around him; and here he met with friends whose perfect sympathy and constancy of love refreshed his heart after the changes and troubles of the stormy time. These friends were Lord and Lady Carbery, who lived at the great house of Llanvihangel called the Golden Grove.

Lord Carbery had been on the king's side during the war, but he was a man greatly respected by both parties, and was allowed after the battle of Marston Moor to retire

to the Golden Grove, and live quietly on his estate. Lady Carbery was a woman of great goodness and sweetness of character, and was a true friend of Taylor's until her death. About three or four years afterwards Lord Carbery married again, and his second wife we have met with before; she was the Lady Alice Egerton, for whom Milton had written the part of the Lady in the masque of "Comus;" and the high principle and purity which Milton taught in his beautiful poem, and which he saw, perhaps, that she then truly represented, she preserved through life. As Lady Alice Carbery she became also the friend of Jeremy Taylor.

We have seen that Taylor now had leisure for calm thought over the troubles of the time. He saw how the divisions, the strife, and the persecutions arose from two main ideas which were held the strongest by the best and truest of men. These were, on the one hand, the fair dream of one united Church; and, on the other, the earnest desire that Christians should be faithful to God's truth in doctrine and form. The first led Laud and others like-minded to seek by persecution to force the Puritans into the Church, and the second led the Puritans to attempt to do away with the Church when the power passed into their hands. But men like Milton and Taylor saw that for the unity of the Church there must be a wider extension of freedom and more love, for it is simply impossible that all shall see things alike, and no healing of the enmity between Christians could be brought about by trying to make them all hold the same opinions; the only way to peace was through each granting liberty to another to differ from himself, and yet loving him as a brother all the time. Milton and Taylor, thus one in their larger view and wider love, differed in the details of their plan. Milton would allow small separate congregations of persons who agreed in their opinions, trusting to a general spirit of love for uniting them as Christian brethren in one

inward spiritual Church; Taylor wished to have one outward community, but on so broad a basis that Christians holding different opinions might yet belong to it, and be one in communion and love. With this idea he wrote a book which he called "The Liberty of Prophesying," showing the "unreasonableness of prescribing to other men's faith, and the iniquity of persecuting differing opinions."

In this work Taylor still held fast to the idea that the English Church was the Church, not of a sect, but of the nation; it was the same idea which had been in the minds of the Elizabethans who reconstructed the Church after the Reformation; but he saw that wide-minded and thoroughly patriotic as many of these men were, they had not laid the foundations of the English Church broadly enough to provide for the differences of opinion which would arise among an honest, thoughtful, earnest people like the English nation, and others who had come after the first founders had been striving more and more to make the English Church the expression of their opinions alone. Jeremy Taylor proposed, therefore, in his book, that the Apostles' Creed should be taken as the foundation of the National Church, and that all Englishmen who agreed in its articles should be considered as in communion with the National Church. This would make Christianity the religion of the nation; but each man was to have "liberty of prophesying," by which Taylor meant that every one should be free to interpret the Scriptures according to his honest judgment, and that none should be forced to agree with the opinions of others, while all might give free expression to the ideas they held. He saw how men were making their own little opinions about unimportant things, articles of faith, and then mistaking the pride and jealousy with which they clung to them for zeal for truth and faithfulness to God; and "so," he says, "we are come to that pass, we think we love not God except we hate our brother." The work of

the Gospel, it was thought, could not be advanced while men differed so much about how the work was to be carried on; but, says Taylor, "few men, in the meantime, considered that so long as men had such variety of principles, such several constitutions, educations, tempers, distempers, hopes, interests and weaknesses, degrees of light and degrees of understanding, it was impossible all should be of one mind. And what is impossible should be done is not necessary should be done."

Taylor's book is important in that it was the first work which so plainly and fully taught that the part of Christians was not to persecute, or even mourn over, those who differed from them, but to accept the difference with respect for the judgment of others and with true-hearted love towards them. It is worthy of notice, too, that he himself had suffered loss and injury in the religious strife of the time, but, notwithstanding, he was the first to claim for those from whom the injury had come, freedom of thought and teaching.

If we ask how it was that Jeremy Taylor saw so much further and more clearly than most of the men of that time, we may perhaps answer that he was made wise by love and holy aspiration. He looked more to the work of religion in the heart and life, and strove more to be like Christ. He saw that many persons were "curiously busy about trifles and impertinences, while they reject those glorious precepts of Christianity and holy life which are the glories of our religion, and would enable us to gain a glorious eternity." The next book he wrote, therefore, was in 1649—"The Great Exemplar of Sanctity and Holy Life according to the Christian Institution, described in the History of the Life and Death of Christ." In the dedication to this "Life of Christ, the Great Exemplar," Taylor says expressly that he had written it with the intention of turning men's thoughts from those things about

which they could not agree, to the contemplation of the character and life of Christ, which all agreed to accept as the perfect example by which their own lives were to be guided. In all the controversy of the time it very rarely happened that any of the arguments used on either side ever turned any one from his previous opinion; and even if one Christian should be persuaded to pass from Church to Church, "in all this," says Taylor, "there is nothing certain, nothing noble. But he that follows the work of God, that is, labours to gain souls, not to a sect and a subdivision, but to the Christian religion, that is, to the faith and obedience of the Lord Jesus Christ, hath a promise to be assisted and rewarded."

Following the same line of earnest endeavour to persuade men to think of religion more as the means of leading them to live holy, obedient lives, as the true children of God, Jeremy Taylor next wrote a little book, called "Holy Living," and this was again followed by "Holy Dying." The first contained directions how those engaged in the active duties of life might live in obedience to God's commands; and the second was written for the help of those who by illness or old age were laid aside from the ordinary life of the world. These books were largely read and greatly prized by many true-hearted Christians; and the poetic beauty of Jeremy Taylor's style of writing gives them a distinguished place in English literature. The following passages illustrate this, and we may notice in them a perfectly musical rhythm, which changes the accent in passing from the bright joyousness of the first description of the rose to the latter part; it is an illustration of the blossoming and decay of human life:—"But sō have I sēen a rōse, newly sprīnging from the clēfts of its hōod, and at first it was fāir as the mōrning, and fūll with the dēw of heaven as a lāmb's fleece, būt when a rūder breath had forced ōpen its vīrgin mōdesty, and dismāntled its tōo youthful and ūnripe retīre-

ments, it begān to put on dārkness, and to declīne to sōftness and the sȳmptoms of a sīckly age; it bōwed the hēad and brōke its stālk, and at nīght, having lost sōme of its leāves and āll its beāuty, it fell īnto the pōrtion of wēeds and oūtworn fāces."

The following is another illustration of the rise and setting of a man's life, full of tender beauty:—"But as when the sun approaches towards the gates of the morning, he first opens a little eye of heaven, and sends away the spirits of darkness, and gives light to a cock, and calls up the lark to matins, and by-and-by gilds the fringes of a cloud, and peeps over the eastern hills, thrusting out his golden horns, like those which decked the brows of Moses when he was forced to wear a veil because himself had seen the face of God; and still, while a man tells the story, the Sun gets up higher, till he shows a fair face and a full light, and then he shines one whole day, under a cloud often, and sometimes weeping great and little showers, and sets quickly; so is a man's reason and his life."

During Taylor's residence at Llanvihangel he preached on Sundays to Lord and Lady Carbery and their household, and any of the people in the neighbourhood who understood English. These sermons were afterwards published. He also wrote a little book of prayers and meditations, to which he gave the name of Lord Carbery's house, "The Golden Grove." Twice during the years from 1647 to 1655 Taylor was imprisoned, but the causes of his apprehension are not known; they were probably connected with his well-known opinions as a Royalist and late chaplain of Charles I. He made use of his imprisonment for writing theological works.

In the summer of 1658 Taylor left Wales and went to Ireland, having been appointed Lecturer at Lisburn. After the Restoration he was made Bishop of Down and Connor, and later on of Dromore. Here he lived the same life of

upright justice, charity, and holiness as he had sought to urge on others. In 1667 he died, the same year in which "Paradise Lost" was published, while John Bunyan was a prisoner in Bedford jail, and Baxter was also suffering persecution.

The need of all true workers in God's kingdom, however different from one another, is clearly seen when we turn from Jeremy Taylor to John Bunyan; and the short-sighted spirit which made the Puritans endeavour to check the teaching of Taylor and put him into prison, and on the other side led the Church to stop the preaching of John Bunyan and put him into prison, should warn us against treating any faithful worker for God with disapproval or contempt, because "he follows not with us" in the same line of service.

The refined culture of Jeremy Taylor put God's truth into the form by which it could be best received by persons of his own class, accustomed to think and to reason, and leading easy lives in which the temptations to idleness and self-indulgence needed a more artificial plan of holy duties and restraints. Bunyan, the tinker, stirred the hearts and flashed God's truth into the minds of the people, in whom feeling and imagination were more exercised than reason and thought, and whose lives, filled with energy of toil and endurance of want, needed the strong assurance that the glory of spiritual things is even more real than the sternest realities of working life. And so with all the faithful men of that time, and of every time, God gives them different work to do, and it cannot possibly be all done in the same way, nor under the same conditions.

John Bunyan was born at Elstow in 1628; his father was a tinker, and after a little schooling he took up the same employment. In 1645 Cromwell was busy re-modelling the Parliamentary army, and many new recruits were raised on both sides. Bunyan, who was now seventeen,

entered the ranks of the Royal* army, and seems to have been present that year at the siege of Leicester, which town was taken by the king's troops on their way against the Eastern Association. Fourteen days after, the battle of Naseby was fought, in which the same troops were engaged, and Bunyan may have been among the Royalist foot who, after forcing Fairfax to give way, were themselves attacked by Cromwell, and turned the fortune of the day by flying from the field. The breaking-up of the Royalist army after this battle probably sent Bunyan home again; and the next thing we hear of is his marriage. His wife was the daughter of godly parents, and though she and her husband were so poor that they had not so much as a dish or a spoon between them, she had two good books, "The Plain Man's Pathway to Heaven" and "The Practice of Piety." Bunyan read these books, and his wife used often to tell him about her father, and what a holy life he had led. He was thus brought to see that there was a life more worth living than the careless, idle way in which he had spent his days, without thought of God or any world but this. He now tried to make his life, outwardly at least, more like that of a good man. But he knew little of God and of His great love, which is the only strong principle of duty, and he knew little of help given in Jesus Christ and by the Holy Spirit; so that after a time he felt he liked his old, careless, pleasure-loving ways better than the narrow way of godliness and duty, and he returned to them. He soon found, how-

* It is sometimes stated that Bunyan fought in the Parliamentary army, because he belonged in after-life to the Baptist division of the Independents; but if he took part in the siege of Leicester he must have been a soldier in the besieging Royal army. He was also at that time a church-goer and bell-ringer, taking part in Sunday sports; and his feelings, if it were a question of feeling at all, would lead him to take the side of the King rather than the Commons, for he would know little of the Parliamentary questions at issue. He probably was enlisted merely as a recruit. He was throughout life a staunch Royalist, believing monarchy to be instituted by God.

ever, that having once known of a truer, higher life, he could not rest satisfied with his old way of living; and for a long time he passed through a terrible struggle between his inclinations and his conscience, or sense of right. It happened one day, while this conflict was going on, that he had to do some tinkering in Bedford, and in one of the streets of the town he saw three or four poor women sitting together on a settle at a door in the sunshine. They were talking about the things of God, and Bunyan stood near and listened to them. They spoke of the work of God in their hearts, in destroying the power of sin, and of how the love of God had been made known to them in the Lord Jesus Christ, and with what words and promises they had been refreshed, comforted, and supported against temptations. The calm joy and strength which faith gave to these poor women was something new to John Bunyan. He went home and thought much about them, while still the weary struggle continued within himself. These poor women he seemed to see, as in a vision, on the sunny slope of a glorious mountain, raised above the darkness and the storms beneath, in which he was fighting and stumbling. And he thought that around this mountain was a high wall, which seemed to shut him out; but Bunyan was thoroughly honest and earnest in his strivings to know the love of God and to draw near to Him, and he thought that he went round this wall to see if he could find any little opening through which he might press. At last he saw a very narrow gap, and after great striving and struggling he contrived to force himself through into the blessed sunshine. "Then," he says, "I was exceeding glad, and went and sat down in the midst of them, and so was comforted with the light and heat of the sun."

It was perhaps this dream or vision which led Bunyan to make himself known to these poor people in Bedford, and they told their minister, Mr. Gifford, about him. At the

beginning of the war, Mr. Gifford had been a gay young cavalier in the king's army; but a near escape from death, and the loss of his property, had made him feel, like Bunyan, that he could no longer live the idle, careless life of the past, and he was ready to sympathise with Bunyan and to help him in his deep spiritual difficulties and struggles. He invited him to come to his house, and he taught him more of the great love of God in Jesus Christ; but it was long before Bunyan could believe this as shown towards himself, and he was often tempted to despair. He came into Bedford at this time on Sundays to hear Mr. Gifford preach, and he joined himself to the good people who gathered around him as their pastor. It soon became plain to Mr. Gifford, and those of his congregation who talked with Bunyan, that he had a wonderful power of imagination, and a strong, shrewd sense, with a ready, striking manner of speech; and as he gained more and more knowledge of religious truth, and became able to hold with a clearer faith the great doctrines of religion, it was suggested to him that he should teach these to others. Cromwell was ruling England then, and "Liberty of Prophesying" was allowed to all who did not interfere with politics in their sermons; so Bunyan became a village preacher, going about the country, and carrying on his trade of tinker too, while he preached on village greens, in farm-houses or barns, or by the wayside, wherever people were willing to listen to him. He knew all the life of these poor country folk—their ignorance, their temptations, their difficulties and trials—and he could show them how God had brought him into the light of His Truth, how he had learned to know the guilt of sin, and the victory over it through Jesus Christ. "In fear and trembling," he says, he set himself to this work, "and did according to his power preach the Gospel that God had shown him."

Meantime changes were going on in England of

which Bunyan took little count at the time, but which were to exercise a great and important influence over his life and work. Cromwell died, and the Restoration was carried out. Charles II. was crowned as king, and Monarchy again established. Then came the question of a National Church. A conference of bishops and Puritans was held at the Savoy Palace in 1661, but it was evident that it was the determination of the leaders of the Church party to restore the Church as it had been before, and not to reconstruct it on a wider basis. They desired to establish the Church again just as it was in the time of Queen Elizabeth, but they brought a very different spirit and principle to the work. The Elizabethan Reformers, as we have seen, wished to include in the Church the majority of the English nation, and a very large number of the people and clergy were, at the commencement of Elizabeth's reign, still Romanists. At the accession of Charles II. a very large number of the people and clergy were Puritan. The Elizabethan Reformers gave up their own opinions on many minor points for the sake of general opinion; the restorers of the Church in Charles II.'s reign pressed their own private views upon the Church, and insisted strongly on carrying out these. In Elizabeth's reign the Church was reconstructed on the principle of including, as far as possible, the whole nation within it; and then an Act of Uniformity was passed. In Charles II.'s reign an Act of Uniformity was passed, with the knowledge that a great part of the nation could not in conscience assent to all the teaching and forms of the Elizabethan Church. Under this Act of Uniformity, 2,000 of the clergy left the Church, with a far larger number of the members of their congregations. These began to meet together for worship outside of the Church. Then the Conventicle Act was passed, which forbade any meeting for religious purposes of more than five persons, except the regular services held in the Church. A further Act,

called the Five Mile Act, prohibited any minister or preacher who had not subscribed to the Act of Uniformity to come within five miles of any town.

Under these new laws the meeting-house in Bedford was shut up, but the people met in the woods and in concealed places, where Bunyan still preached to them. After the passing of the Five Mile Act, Bunyan made up his mind to withdraw from the town; and it was arranged that on one dark November evening he should meet a few of the congregation, and give them some parting words of help and counsel. The meeting was to be held at a house in a village near, called Lamsell; and just as he was about to begin his address, the constables entered and arrested him. He was allowed to say a few farewell words, and the next day he was brought before the magistrates. He was told he might go home if he would engage to preach no more; but Bunyan saw that if he thus gave in to this law, it would be maintained in all its force, and would soon silence the free action of Truth; he therefore declared he could make no such promise, and he was sent to prison.

It was no small trial to John Bunyan to give up his freedom, and to leave his wife and children. "I had two considerations especially in my heart," he said, "how to be able to endure, should my imprisonment be long and tedious, and how to be able to encounter death should that be my portion. I was made to see that if I would suffer rightly, I must pass sentence of death upon everything that can properly be called a thing of this life, even to reckon myself, my wife, my children, my health, my enjoyments, all as dead to me, and myself as dead to them. Yet I was a man compassed with infirmities. The parting with my wife and poor children hath often been to me in this place as the pulling of my flesh from my bones, and that not only because I am too fond of these mercies, but also because I should have often brought to my mind the

hardships, miseries, and wants that my poor family was like to meet with should I be taken from them, especially my poor blind child, who lay nearer my heart than all I had besides. Poor child, thought I, what sorrow art thou like to have for thy portion in this world! Thou must be beaten, suffer hunger, cold, nakedness, and a thousand calamities, though I cannot now endure the wind should blow on thee. But yet, thought I, I must venture all with God, though it goeth to the quick to leave you. I was as a man who was pulling down his house upon the head of his wife and children. Yet, thought I, I must do it, I must do it. I had this for consideration, that if I should now venture all for God, I engaged God to take care of all my concernments."

Bunyan stayed in prison for more than twelve years. It was in vain that his faithful wife used every endeavour to obtain his release, appealing to the judges at the assizes, and even taking a journey to London to petition for his pardon; but as long as the Conventicle Act remained in force, and as long as Bunyan would not promise to give up preaching, there was no legal way in which he could have been set free. It was no doubt a time of great trial and suffering to him in many ways, but within his soul was light and joy. Speaking of this time he said:—"I never had in all my life so great an inlet into the Word of God as now; those Scriptures that I saw nothing in before were made in this place and state to shine upon me. Jesus Christ was never more real and apparent than now; here I have seen and felt Him indeed." Besides this blessed sense of Christ's presence, Bunyan had other alleviations; he was allowed the visits of his wife and children and friends, and as years passed on he was often allowed to go from the gaol for a few hours at a time. Although Bunyan could not preach, he must have felt at once that he was not silenced. He had already written some religious books, and the twelve years

of prison life were twelve years of busy, industrious work; while in the silence and rest from active life, his intellect grew, and his faculties reached a fuller development than might have been possible if he had continued his old life of tinkering and preaching. It is the work of these twelve years which gives Bunyan a place in the story of our English Literature. He wrote during this time many sermons on various subjects, and some hymns and emblems for children; but his most remarkable works were his allegories. He showed in his emblems, and in some of his other religious writings, that he had a keen perception of how material things can express spiritual ideas; that there is a kind of likeness, as it were, between abstract conceptions of which we can only think, and outward things which we can see; but what it was that first suggested to Bunyan the writing of his longer allegories we do not know; it appears, however, almost certain that he had read some of the old English allegories, and amongst them the first book of Spenser's "Faerie Queene." A shoemaker, who was with him in Bedford Gaol at one time, seems to have been a great reader, and lent him translations of Plato; perhaps he may also have lent him Spenser and other allegories. Bunyan's poetic mind would feel at once the charm of these books, and he would understand how such works of imagination must always have a strong fascination for all readers; and then his earnest spirit would suggest to him whether the truths of God might not be put into such a form, so that many who would not read an essay or a sermon might be charmed and taught by a bright, genial, imaginative story. Spenser, as we have seen, had the same deep, earnest purpose in writing the "Faerie Queene;" but his allegory dealt with knights and ladies, and was full of allusions that the simple folk of the country villages, where Bunyan had preached, could not understand. He took for his hero, therefore,

a plain Englishman, such as themselves and their neighbours, and he surrounded him with companions just like any of the townsfolk of Bedford, and he made him travel along roads and lanes, past country towns, through miry sloughs, and over heaths and green meadows, such as Bunyan himself had often passed through when he trudged alone, tinkering and preaching. But still Bunyan's work was to be as true a poem as Spenser's, for it was to be the story of the struggles, conflicts, and victories which lift us heavenward, and of the sweet consolations and helps that God sends to us on our way; and in all this there is the very essence of true poetry, for it shows us what is higher and more beautiful than the common, sordid life of man on earth, and what is also of the most surpassing interest.

There was an old translation of a French book into English, which was called the "Pilgrimage of Man," and which sets forth the story of the Christian life as a pilgrimage through this world to the New Jerusalem. It is possible that Bunyan had seen or heard of this book, or he may have taken the title of his own allegory, "The Pilgrim's Progress," from the Epistle to the Hebrews, where the heroes of Faith are spoken of as "strangers and pilgrims on the earth," seeking "a better country, that is, a heavenly."

Bunyan begins his story with Christian, his hero, still in the City of Destruction; but though this city has so terrible a name, we see that the life of its inhabitants is only the common, idle, selfish, easy life of an ordinary English country town. This, however, is not enough for Christian. He sees that this is sinking downwards, instead of rising heavenward, and his eyes are opened, as Bunyan's were, to the want of love to God and of an earnest sense of duty in it. The weight of the worthless, sinful past hangs like a heavy burden on his shoulders, and he knows not what to do. In vain his wife and neighbours try to turn him from his thoughts, and make him again forget all the

higher aims of life. Then Evangelist comes, and, when he hears of his troubled mind, asks him, as perhaps Mr. Gifford asked Bunyan, "If this be thy condition, why standest thou still?" Despair over the past was not the upward road to heaven; and Evangelist points Christian to a little gate leading to that narrow path along which he must now struggle and fight his way towards the heavenly city. Christian runs forward, but is followed by two neighbours, Obstinate and Pliable, the one representing a man determined to cling to a selfish earthly life. "What," he says, "leave our friends and our *comforts?*" The other a man who, besides his friends and his comforts in the City of Destruction, would like to have friends and comforts in the heavenly city too. Obstinate goes back at once.

Soon as they cross the heath they fall into the miry bog, the Slough of Despond. This is enough for Pliable, who scrambles out on the side nearest the city of Destruction and hastens to his home again. Meanwhile Christian pushes bravely on; but the burden on his back weighs him down. The remembrance of past sin makes him doubt and despair of ever walking in the heavenly way. Then Help comes and gives him a strong hand; and he is lifted up on firm ground again. Christian walks on alone now towards the wicket-gate, when presently Mr. Worldly Wiseman appears walking across the field, and he comes out into the road just as Christian passes. He is greatly concerned at Christian's burden, advises him with all speed to get rid of it, and sends him to Mr. Legality—who lives in the town of Morality, round under the hill—and either he or his son, Mr. Civility, will remove the burden from Christian's shoulders; that is, they would persuade him into believing that the standard of his life hitherto was high enough, that he need not regret the past with its neglect of God, but make himself at ease, and be satisfied that wrong was not wrong, and would not bring forth its own evil fruit.

Christian follows the road pointed out to him by Mr. Worldly Wiseman; but he no sooner gets under the hill, which is Sinai, than it seems as if it would fall on his head and crush him. He learns that God's commands are just and true, and cannot be disregarded with impunity. Then Evangelist comes to him again and sets him in the right way to the wicket gate.

The wicket gate is opened to him after persevering in knocking, and Good Will shows him the narrow road lying before him, along which he must travel, the road "cast up by the patriarchs, prophets, Christ, and His apostles." He is warned not to turn out of it into any of the many ways "that butt down upon this." But Christian does not lose his burden here, though he has started on the heavenly way; he is not yet to lose sight and remembrance of the past; nor is the easing from the burden to be the first and chief thing he is to seek, but rather to keep in the narrow way of obedience. "As to thy burden," says Good Will, "be content to bear it until thou comest to the place of deliverance, for there it will fall from thy back of itself."

So Christian goes on his way till he comes to the Interpreter's house, where he is to stay for further instruction in the Christian life. Here he learns many things by means of symbols. He is first taught how he may know the right kind of guide to whom he may trust to help him in any difficulties he may meet with in his course (that is, the true Christian pastor), and he is shown the picture of such a one, a grave man, his eyes lifted up to heaven, the best of books in his hands, the law of truth upon his lips, the world behind his back, while he stood as if he pleaded with men, and above his head hung a crown of gold. Then he is shown a maid sweeping a parlour; the dust flies about everywhere, but presently she brings water and sprinkles it—the dust is laid and the room cleansed. This, he is told, is a symbol of the heart of man defiled with sin; the water is

the sweet and gracious influences of the Gospel by which sin is subdued and the soul made clean. In another room he sees two little children sitting in their chairs. Passion, the elder, is discontented and disturbed, Patience is very quiet. The governor of them wishes them to stay for their best things till next year, but Passion will have everything now, while "Patience is willing to wait." Then Christian sees how Passion has money brought to him, and he scoffs at Patience while he squanders the money away, and soon has nothing but rags left to him. These represent the man who will have all of this world for his own enjoyment now, and the man who waits for his best things in the world to come. Next the Interpreter shows Christian a stately palace, beautiful to behold, and on the top of it are persons walking dressed in golden raiment. Many others stand about the door, as if they wished to enter but durst not, for in the doorway stand many men in armour to keep it. At a little distance sits a man at a table with a book and an ink-horn, to take the names of any who would venture in. At last there comes a brave man, who goes up to the table and says, in resolute voice, "Set down my name, sir;" then he draws his sword, and with undaunted courage fights his way through the armed men into the palace, while pleasant voices welcome him and sing—

> "Come in, come in,
> Eternal glory thou shalt win."

And Christian smiled and said, "I think verily I know the meaning of this," for he knew how he too must "fight the good fight of faith" if he would enter into heaven. To strengthen him in being faithful unto death, he is shown the man in a cage who has given up the good fight and fallen into despair, and the man who has dreamed of the day of judgment. Then Christian leaves the Interpreter's house and continues his journey; and whilst he is only

intent on pressing forward with all good speed, he comes to a cross and a sepulchre, and just as he comes up to the cross his burden falls from his shoulders into the sepulchre. Then was Christian light and gladsome, and said with a merry heart, "He hath given me rest by His sorrow, and life by His death." And three angels come to him. The first says, "Thy sins be forgiven thee;" the second took off his rags and clothed him in raiment new and clean; the third gave him a roll which he was to carry with him till he reached the gate of the heavenly city.

Full of joy, he goes on singing, passing on his way Simple, Sloth, and Presumption, who could not be awaked from sleep, and meeting Formalist and Hypocrisy, who come tumbling over the wall into the narrow way, and he reaches the foot of the hill Difficulty. Now he can run no longer, but "falls from running to going, and from going to clambering upon his hands and knees." On the hill he meets two men hurrying down, who tell him there are lions in the way before him, but Christian will not turn back for the lions; he has, however, to return part of the way to an Arbour, where he rested and has left his roll, so when he again reaches the top of the hill it is nearly dark; but now he sees the Palace Beautiful, and the porter calls to him that the lions which guard the way are chained. The Palace Beautiful is very like the House of Holiness in Spenser's allegory, and both represent Bunyan's and Spenser's ideal of the outward Church. Holiness and Beauty are the same things, both implying completeness and perfection. Both were guarded by a watchful porter, who would keep out those who had no right to enter. Christian, like the Red Cross Knight, is received by the three ladies of the house, whom Bunyan names Piety, Prudence, and Charity; and like Spenser's Fidelia, Speranza, and Charissa, they talk with and instruct the pilgrim. The rest to be found in the ideal Church is expressed in Spenser by "the goodly lodge,"

and "easie bed," to which Obedience leads the knight; Christian is taken to "a large upper chamber, whose window opened towards the sun-rising, and the name of the chamber was Peace." The Church is the guardian and preserver of the Word of God, and of the records of saints and martyrs who through faith have wrought wonders and overcome the world. And the next morning Christian is taken into the study, and shown the records of the Church. Then he is taken to the armoury, and clothed from head to foot in armour—the same armour in which Spenser's knight had to be clothed before he could fight with the dragon—the Breastplate of Righteousness, the Shield of Faith, the Sword of the Spirit, the Helmet of the Hope of Salvation, and another weapon called All Prayer.

The next day Christian goes to the top of the house, where he is shown "Immanuel's Land," a most pleasant country; and here again we are reminded of how Heavenly Contemplation shows the Red Cross Knight the heavenly city, the New Jerusalem, from the top of the hill near the House of Holiness.

Then Christian must go on his journey, and he descends the hill into the Valley of Humiliation. There is a terrible conflict before him, to end in victory; but it must be fought in humble dependence on God's strength, and, as with the Red Cross Knight in the House of Holiness, a deeper knowledge of sinfulness and weakness comes as a preparation for the battle and the triumph. Christian sees Apollyon crossing the field to meet him, a dragon clothed in scales, with hideous wings, and sending forth flames and smoke. There are many points of resemblance between Bunyan's and Spenser's dragons, and both Christian and the Red Cross Knight are refreshed and strengthened during the conflict by "leaves from the Tree of Life;" Christian's struggle, however, is not with the power of evil in the world, but with temptation addressed to his own soul.

Apollyon does all he can to make Christian give up the service of Christ, and when he finds that by no persuasions or bribes can he induce Christian to leave the narrow way and go back, he "straddles quite over the whole breadth of the way," so as to make it impossible for him to go forward. Then the fight begins; and it ends, not in the destruction of Apollyon, but in his total defeat, so that he "spread forth his dragon wings and sped away," leaving Christian on his guard lest he might at any time return.

And now Christian has another terrible passage of his journey before him; he has resisted the temptation to give up Christ's service and return to the world, and Apollyon is gone, but the Valley of the Shadow of Death lies before him. The dark shadow cast over Death falls when there is no hope of life beyond, no assurance of the existence of God and of his unchanging love, immortal as the soul. Bunyan knew what the cold, black shadow of doubt was, and how it hid from life and death all their meaning and glory; and he paints most vividly the picture of how the world appears when faith is gone. "He heard also in that valley a continual howling and yelling, as of a people under unutterable misery, who there sat bound in afflictions and irons; and over that valley hang the discouraging clouds of confusion; death also does always spread his wings over it. In a word, it is every whit dreadful, being utterly without order." Christian has to walk in darkness along the narrow way, with the ditch on one side and the quagmire on the other; but he betakes himself to his weapon "All Prayer," and, like Bunyan himself when tempted by doubt, he resolves, whether in darkness or in light, he will still keep steadily on in the narrow path, the way of holiness, and he cries with a resolute voice, "I will walk in the strength of the Lord God." Then his tempters give way, and Christian hears before him the voice of a man walking like himself in the dark valley, and saying with cheering confidence,

"Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no ill, for Thou art with me." The stranger's faith re-assures Christian, and he hastens onwards, passing safely over the traps and snares that cover the end of the valley, and catching no hurt as he goes by the cave of the two giants, Pope and Pagan, until he overtakes the pilgrim ahead of him, and finds it to be his friend Faithful, from the City of Destruction. Faithful had followed Christian, but not stopping at the Palace Beautiful, had thus got the start of Christian. Faithful recounts his adventures; and soon they are joined by another fellow-townsman, Talkative, of Prating Row. He represents just such a character as sprang up at the time of the Commonwealth, when religion was in fashion, and men learnt to talk it, and sometime perhaps to believe, that the talk was religion itself. He understood clearly the theology of the time, and could quote Scripture glibly. Faithful is at first taken in by his religious talk, until Christian tells him—"As he talks now with you, so will he talk when on the ale-bench. The more drink he hath in his crown the more of these things he hath in his mouth. Religion hath no place in his heart or home or conduct; all that he hath lieth in his tongue, and his religion is to make a noise therewith." As soon as Faithful tries to draw Talkative on to speak of religion in daily life, he will have nothing more to say to the two pilgrims, but "flings away from them."

The narrow way now leads the pilgrims through the town of Vanity, where a fair is held all the year round. The old English fairs were occasions of pleasure-seeking and revelling of all kinds; but they came but once a year, and when the day was over the good folks went back again to their ordinary work and duty. In this town it was always fair time, and there were no days for work and duty in the whole year. Vanity Fair represents in the allegory the material life of this world, separated from all higher life; a life in

which self-interest, low desires, and vain pleasures are the constant aim of all that is done. It is one unceasing round of buying and selling and pleasure-seeking—a perpetual "fair." As religion teaches the subjection of worldly things to spiritual, so there is the strongest antagonism in the fair against religion. The very dress, manners, and speech of the pilgrims are a source of offence to those whose lives are one perpetual fair-day. Still greater offence is given, because the pilgrims decline to buy the merchandise of the fair, and say, "We buy the Truth." They are reviled as mad, are shut up in the cage, with their feet in the stocks. Then they are brought to trial before the judge Lord Hategood. Faithful speaks out bravely in their defence, and defies the prince of that town, who is Beelzebub. The judge sums up against them, and then the jury give each one his verdict. Mr. Blindman, the foreman, says: "I see clearly that this man is a heretic." Mr. Nogood: "Away with such a fellow from the earth." Mr. Malice: "I hate the very look of him." Mr. Lovelust: "I could never endure him." Mr. Live-loose: "Nor I, for he would be continually condemning my ways." Mr. Heady: "Hang him, hang him." "A sorry scrub," says Mr. Highmind. "My heart riseth against him," says Mr. Enmity. "He is a rogue," says Mr. Liar. "Hanging is too good for him," says Mr. Cruelty. "Let us despatch him out of the way," says Mr. Hatelight. Then says Mr. Implacable: "Might I have all the world given to me, I could not be reconciled to him, therefore let us bring him in guilty of death."

So Faithful is condemned and tortured, and then burnt to ashes at the stake. Christian is kept in prison for a while, but escapes, and is joined by Hopeful, who has been won to join him by beholding Faithful's brave end. As they pass on their way they meet By-ends, another clever sketch of a character common at that time. He comes from the town of Fair-speech, has for his kindred my Lord Turn-about.

Mr. Smooth-man, Mr. Facing-both-ways, Mr. Any-thing, and the parson of the parish, Mr. Two-tongues; his wife is Lady Feigning's daughter, "and she is arrived to such a pitch of breeding that she knows how to carry it to all, even to prince and peasant."

Mr. By-ends is a man "whose luck it is always to jump in his judgment with the present way of the times, whatever it may be, and his chance was to get thereby." That is, he had been strict Churchman when Laud was in power; precise Puritan and professor of religion during the Commonwealth; frivolous and irreligious now Charles II. was king. He proposes to join the pilgrims, but Christian tells him, "If you go with us, you must go against wind and tide; you must also own Religion in his rags, as well as in his silver slippers; and stand by him too when bound in irons, as well as when he walketh the streets with applause." This By-ends will not agree to, and they part. He soon meets with more congenial companions, Hold-the-world, Money-love, and Save-all, and in the end they are tempted by Demas to try their fortunes in a silver-mine, where they all perish.

Christian and Hopeful go on their way until they come to a pleasant river, with a meadow on either side, curiously beautified with lilies, and green all the year round. Bunyan here may have had in his mind's eye some pleasant scene beside the Ouse, at the "time when Ouse displayed her lilies newly blown." Here the pilgrims spend some peaceful, happy days; but rest is only for the gaining of new strength, and they must still press onwards. And now as they journey, the narrow path leads them away from the pleasant river, and the road becomes rough and painful to their feet. On the left hand of the road, however, there is a meadow, and a stile, with a pathway that seems to lie along the wayside. Christian proposes to Hopeful to take this easy path, instead of the way appointed them. Vain-

confidence tells them they are in the right way, but soon a storm comes on, the waters rise, it is dark, and they cannot find the stile again; they go to sleep upon the ground, and are found there next morning by Giant Despair. They are carried off prisoners to his castle, and shut up in a dark dungeon, from which there appears to be no escape. Here they stay from Wednesday morning till Saturday night without food, and are beaten by the Giant with his "grievous crab-tree cudgel."

But the great purpose of the Giant Despair is to induce the pilgrims to commit suicide. The resemblance here between Spenser's Giant Despair, and his persuasions to the Red Cross Knight to commit suicide, seem to be more than accidental; but Bunyan's Giant Despair, with his wife Diffidence, is the homely old giant of the old English stories.

Christian at last remembers the key he has in his bosom called Promise; and with this, on the sunshiny Sunday morning, he opens the locks of Doubting Castle, and they escape.

The day is altogether too bright and full of hope for the dismal giant, and he is seized with a fit, and cannot pursue them. Then Christian and Hopeful go on their way, singing together—

> "Out of the way we went, and there we found
> What 'twas to tread upon forbidden ground.
> And let them that come after have a care,
> Lest they, for trespassing, his prisoners are,
> Whose castle's Doubting and whose name's Despair."

The next stage of their journey brings them to the Delectable Mountains, where the shepherds, Knowledge, Experience, Watchful, and Sincere, feed their flocks. From these mountains Heaven seems near, and the dangers of the journey left behind. But they have not yet entered the Celestial City, and they are shown how even here there are

men who have been dashed to pieces on Mount Error, and there are others walking sightless among the tombs who have been in Doubting Castle, while in the Delectable Mountains themselves there is a door which is a by-way to hell for those who have set out on pilgrimage but deserted the true way. The pilgrims learn the lesson, and say to one another, "We have need to cry to the Strong for strength." "Aye," say the Shepherds, "and you will have need to use it too."

They go on their way, and meet with Ignorance, "a brisk country lad" from the country of Conceit. He is perfectly satisfied with his own ideas, and refuses to accept any more truth than he now possesses.

Though the pilgrims are near the end of their journey, they are not beyond the need of watchfulness and care. They meet Apostate, being carried to the door in the hill; they fall themselves into the net of the Flatterer; and they see Atheist coming towards them, with his back turned on the Celestial City, and who declares there is no such a place in the universe. Then follow the dangers of the Enchanted Ground, where the pilgrims keep one another awake by profitable talk.

The last stage of the journey is ended when they enter the land of Beulah. This is the sweet, calm close of a heavenly life on earth, when the storms and conflicts are over, and everything is made bright by the very light of heaven itself. "In this country the sun shines day and night;" it is beyond the dark shadow cast over life by doubts of immortality; it is "out of the reach of Giant Despair," and Doubting Castle cannot even be seen from it. Faith is clear and strong. Heaven is near; no clouds dim the assurance of Christ's salvation and God's love; and the pilgrims only long to leave this blessed land that they may enter through the gates of the Celestial City into the presence of their King, where they may behold Him in His

beauty. But though they are beyond the Shadow of Death, there is the dark river itself to be crossed—the river which is to be deeper or shallower as they "believe in the king of the place."

They pass through the dark unknown waters, Christian being troubled and distressed, but cheered and supported by Hopeful until light breaks in upon him, and they gain the other side, where two "shining ones" are waiting for them. With these they ascend together "through the regions of the air," talking of all the joy and blessedness of the heavenly city, until they draw near to the golden gates. Here they are met and welcomed by a company of the heavenly host; and thus with triumph and the music of heaven they are conducted to the gates, which open to them with the words, "Enter ye into the joy of our Lord." There Christian and Hopeful go in, singing, "Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever." And the gates close, and the Dreamer sees them no more.

The "Pilgrim's Progress" was at once largely read. It was so true to the experience of every human being, whatever his intellectual opinions or condition of life, that it belonged to all. Many editions were published in Bunyan's lifetime, and it was translated soon into all the languages of Europe. No book, except the Bible, has been so universally read and accepted by every class of persons. Encouraged by its success, Bunyan wrote a second part, which tells the story of the pilgrimage of Christian's wife Christiana, with their sons, and a young friend Mercy. There are many clever descriptions of character in it; but it represents the religious life of women and children, and the dignity and grace of Christiana and sweet modesty of Mercy would have been sacrificed, if they had been pictured as engaging in the personal conflicts and battles of Christian. They have Mr. Great-Heart for their guide and

defender; and though it is the same narrow road, they have not the same difficulties to encounter. It is religion in the quiet life of home, guided and protected, with nothing to disturb its full, simple, unwavering faith—a religion as divine and as beautiful as the victorious battling of Christian, but wanting in those elements of risk and danger, struggle and triumph, dark cloud and glorious light, which make the story of Christian so heroic and full of intense interest at every step.

Another allegory which Bunyan wrote is "The Holy War." This is the war between good and evil in the soul of man, in which "Christ is manifested to destroy the works of the devil;" but the story of a town can never have the poetry and human interest of the story of an individual, and the allegory is more complicated and obscure, so that the book is little read, as compared with the "Pilgrim's Progress."

When the "Declaration of Indulgence" was decreed by Charles II. in 1672, Bunyan was released by it from prison. He was so little of a politician that he did not perceive the illegality of the Act, and the mischief which might happen if kings could dispense with the laws at their pleasure. On his release he became the minister of the Baptist Church in Bedford, where Mr. Gifford had preached. He was often asked to take the charge of larger congregations in London and other towns, but he would not leave Bedford. Here he lived for sixteen years, paying occasional visits to London, where crowds of people would gather to hear him preach; but Bunyan was too great and true a man to seek for this kind of popularity. He was satisfied to do his work simply, whatever it might be, and (as his death shows) never lost sight of individuals in the applause of a crowd.

He was told in August, 1688, of a quarrel which was going on between a father and a son whom he knew in

Reading. He thought the father was dealing hardly with the young man, with whom, remembering his own youth, he felt sympathy. He set off on horseback to travel from Bedford to Reading in hope of reconciling them. He was successful in restoring love between them, and he then went on to London. On the road he was caught in heavy rain, and he got wet through. He went to the house of a friend in London; but he had taken a chill, which brought on fever, and he died at his friend's house about ten days afterwards. His last words were, "Take me, I come to Thee." He was buried in his friend's vault in Bunhill Fields.

Another writer of this time, who sought the peace of the Church through love, with as much earnestness as Jeremy Taylor, and who lived as near to-heaven as John Bunyan, was Richard Baxter. While Taylor represents the faithful, loyal Churchman of the time, wide-minded in culture, and large-hearted in charity; and Bunyan stands for the earnest, spiritually-minded Puritan, independent of all human authority, and strong in faith and in obedience to his convictions of duty; Baxter seems to form a link between the two, and shows us how every shade of opinion has its true workers, recognised by God as fellow-workers with Him. Taylor did all his work within the National Church, Bunyan did his outside it, Baxter worked both within and without the Church. Like Taylor, Baxter received episcopal ordination, but felt himself as free as Bunyan to preach according to his views of truth. He had a reverence for authority as tender as Taylor's, and an independent love of truth as constant as Bunyan's. All three of these men, highest types of the classes they represent, faithful servants of God, working for the same ends, under the same Master, suffered imprisonment and persecutions from their fellow-Christians, but they stand side by side as brothers in the kingdom of God, and their works

live together in equal honour in the story of our English Literature.

Richard Baxter was born in Shropshire in 1615. His family were earnest and devout, and he was brought up religiously, and began early to study for the Church; his health was delicate, which made him often feel that his life on earth might be a short one. He was ordained by the Bishop of Worcester, and found work for a few years in keeping a school at Dudley, and preaching in the villages. In 1640 he was invited by the people of Kidderminster to become their preacher, the vicar being incapable of preaching. He held this office for sixteen years, the vicar keeping, by Baxter's wish, the vicarage-house and the greater part of the income of the living. The town of Kidderminster was notorious, when Baxter went there, for ignorance and profaneness, but so great a blessing followed his earnest preaching that, in a few years, a great change came over the whole place; there was scarcely a family that did not begin and end the day with prayer and reading the Bible, the number of communicants at church increased from two or three persons to six hundred, of whom he himself declared "there were not twelve concerning whose sincere piety he had not reason to entertain good hopes."

When Cromwell re-modelled the army, and raised his troop of Ironsides, he asked Baxter to be his chaplain. Baxter at first refused, as he did not approve of the war against the king, but he afterwards consented, and was for two years chaplain to a regiment, and was present at many sieges and battles. He used his influence while with the army to check the constant discussion of minor details of religion, which produced that state of mind Taylor speaks of when "we think we love not God except we hate our brother."

At the end of the war Baxter fell ill, and for some time was alone with only a servant at Sir John Cook's, in Derbyshire. Here, in the near prospect of death, his thoughts

dwelt much on the glories of heaven, and he began to write what afterwards grew into his greatest work, "The Saint's Everlasting Rest." His great desire in writing this book was to lead men to think more of their citizenship in heaven, and to be more careful about living a heavenly life of holiness and love on earth, than to defend each special opinion of their own. In a heavenly life Baxter saw the unity of the Church; and in his directions how to lead this heavenly life, he says, "Avoid frequent disputes about lesser truths, and a religion that lies only in opinions. They are usually least acquainted with a heavenly life who are violent disputers about the circumstantials of religion. He whose religion is in his opinions, will be most frequently and zealously speaking his opinions; and he whose religion lies in the knowledge and love of God and Christ, will be most delightfully speaking of that happy time when he shall enjoy them; he is a rare and precious Christian who is skilful to improve well-known truths." Besides exhorting men to avoid all that would lead to hard thoughts of others and destroy love towards their fellow-men, Baxter also urged them to beware of hard thoughts and false representations of God — "Ever keep thy soul possessed with believing thoughts of the infinite love of God. Love is the attractive of love. Few so vile but will love those that love them. No doubt it is the death of our heavenly life to have hard thoughts of God. When our ignorance and unbelief have drawn the most deformed picture of God in our imagination, then we complain that we cannot love Him, nor delight in Him. Alas, that we should thus blaspheme God and blast our own joys. Oh, that we could always think of God as we do of a friend, as of one that unfeignedly loves us, even more than we do ourselves; whose very heart is set upon us to do us good, and hath therefore provided for us an everlasting dwelling with Himself; it would not then be so hard to have our hearts ever with Him."

Baxter thus sought, by raising men's thoughts to heaven, to win them to greater love, both towards God and their fellow-men.

He returned to Kidderminster and continued his work there during the Commonwealth, and a part of that work was the bringing together in associations, Christians of all parties who lived near to one another. After the Restoration Baxter was one of those twelve Puritans who met the twelve bishops at the Savoy Conference, and sought to find some way of bringing about outward unity in the English Church, or at least of so extending its limits as to include a larger number of the English people within its communion. But the separation and conflict of the last sixty years made this now impossible, and nothing was done. The next year another Act of Uniformity was passed which, as we have seen, could now only be maintained by persecution. It came into force on St. Bartholomew's Day, August 24th, and Baxter was one of those Puritan clergy who by it were shut out from the Church. He had to give up his people at Kidderminster, whose pastor he had been so long, and where he had done so much good. But he lived still in their hearts, and the good seed he had sown long bore fruit in that town. There was one also among them whom he specially loved, and who, in the same year that he lost his living, became his wife. She was a young lady named Margaret Charlton, and she shared with him the trials and hardships of his later years. They went to live at Acton, and Baxter, silenced as a preacher, wrote many religious books. On one occasion he was, like Bunyan, preaching or expounding the Bible to some friends in his own house. For this act he was put into Clerkenwell Prison, and his wife went to prison with him, and he says "she was never so cheerful a companion to me as in prison." After his discharge he lived at Totteridge; but in the beginning of James II.'s reign he was again in prison for eighteen

months, for complaining in some of his writings of the wrongs the Puritans then suffered. The last years of his life were spent more peacefully. The Act of Toleration was passed on the accession of William III., and Baxter moved to London. He died in 1691, after lingering for some time in weak health, during which time Mr. Flavell, one of his friends, says of him—"Mr. Baxter is almost in heaven; living in the daily views and cheerful expectation of *the saint's everlasting rest with God;* and is left for a little while among us, as a great example of the life of faith."

CHAPTER XV.

FRENCH INFLUENCE—DRYDEN.

We have seen how the Italian style affected the form of English Literature during the sixteenth and part of the seventeenth centuries; we have now to find the same kind of influence exerted by French Literature through the latter half of the seventeenth and the greater part of the eighteenth centuries. We may consider the French influence to have entered England with the Restoration, when Charles II. and many of his courtiers returned from their exile in France. To understand what this precise influence over English Literature was, we must go to France for a little while, and see what had been going on in the formation of the French language and growth of the literature. The French language up to 1600 had been very unsettled. Two distinct dialects were spoken which were almost as different as two languages. These had been formed in this way. Ancient Gaul had been much more thoroughly conquered and colonised by the Romans than Ancient Britain, and the Latin language had become the language of the country, excepting in such out-of-the-way parts as were still held by the Gauls, and where Keltic was spoken. After the breaking-up of the Roman Empire, the Teutonic tribes who passed into Gaul brought with them their language; and in the northern districts where they settled, the common speech became Teutonic with a mixture of Latin; in the south of France the language remained Latin with a slighter mixture of Teutonic. The

difficulty of writing any literature which could be understood and appreciated by the whole of France was a check upon its production, and consequently France has no really national literature before the beginning of the seventeenth century.

Meantime the revival of learning had spread into France, and produced a taste for literature and for the study of the ancient languages of Greece and Rome. There were persons about the Court who read Italian literature, and among these the Marquise de Rambouillet was especially distinguished. She held reunions at her house, where ladies and gentlemen discussed poetry and plays, and questions regarding the French language, grammatical rules, and the choice of words. They set themselves to refine the language, and to cultivate elegance of expression. The Latin element in the French language being the most associated with learning, and the ladies and gentlemen, having a fancy for the more high-sounding Latin words and terms, preferred always the Latin-French to the Teutonic. It was from these reunions, probably, that the idea of a French Academy took its rise, which should exercise authority over the language, fix its rules, and choose its words, and thus constitute that standard of appeal which we seek in our best literature.

The Academy consisted of forty members, and they compiled a Dictionary and drew up a Grammar. The preference was given in these works to the Latin element in the language, and the result was that it acquired a preponderance over the Teutonic in all speaking and writing which aimed to be elegant and refined.

The Academy next proceeded to lay down authoritative rules for literature, prescribing the precise form for poetry and plays, and every kind of literary composition. For these the Academy went to the classical literature, which, though not itself cramped by outside rules, had its natural

laws of art. To find these out, and make them binding on French writers, was the purpose of much study and criticism. French literature started therefore in a dress already prepared for it, as it were; and as the first writers who adapted themselves to the prescribed forms and style were men of real vigour and genius, they gave the new rules an influence in other countries.

The special characteristics of the French influence over English literature were these. The first French literature was written for a courtly circle with narrow views of life and little knowledge of its deeper experiences, struggles, and sorrows; the plays were therefore stories of Court intrigues, the characters were kings and queens and persons about a Court, and it was made an object to introduce as much splendid scenery and gorgeous dress as possible. The poetry and plays expressed the overstrained sentiments of a thoroughly artificial life, instead of simple, natural feeling. A taste for classical allusions and long Latinised words crept into English literature and led to the formation of a style of expression called poetic diction, quite different from the words and phrases which spring to our lips in moments of really intense feeling. Both plays and poetry were written in rhymed couplets of five feet in each line; and care was taken to preserve the neatness and finish of the verse, and to complete the thought within the limits of the stanza. There was no place in the even measure of the lines for that hesitation and broken utterance in which alone strong feeling can find expression, nor for the eager overflow of enthusiasm. In the form of the literature there was the same subjection to classical rules as in the French literature.

The adoption of these fixed rules, and the setting up of an artificial standard of appeal outside literature itself, led to the growth of a class of professed critics. It was easy to master the rules, and then apply them to the

criticism of great works, and this could be done by persons utterly incapable of producing a great work, or of even appreciating it; and thus many of our chief writers, even Shakespeare, were set aside by these critics as barbarous. When the taste for criticism is stronger than the love of literature, and tyrannises over it, the subjects of literature are sure to be taken from the surface of society, or from those things which can be treated without the warmth of personal interest; and the best feelings of humanity are reserved from expression in literature. Human life cannot thus be painted truly and completely, but only certain phases of it, in which its weakness, its follies, or its evils are represented. Then literature fails to answer all its higher purposes, for it no longer teaches us to see and love the ideal, or enlarges our hearts by sympathy with human nature and love for our fellow-men. At such a time satire, which is often wisely used for an earnest purpose, becomes popular, and is cultivated for its own sake; and the faith in human progress and hope for the world's future are clouded by gazing on the evils of a single class or circle, while the real wish to improve even these is lost in the amusement of ridiculing them.

Many of these results of the French influence were felt more or less in the English literature of this time; but there was still that working together for good going on, which is the principle of constant progress, for as the blighted fruit of a season falls quickly and dies, and all that is good and sound has an enduring life and remains, so the good and lasting influence of the French style has its hold still on our literature in the clear grammatical English, the choice of fitting words, and the careful work which our best authors give to their writings, while the false effects have now passed away.

At the time itself it was of course the weaker minds only who were completely carried along by the current

of the popular fashion, and who, learning the artificial knack of the new style, cultivated it for its own sake. The greater minds retained their own individuality, and by their innate vigour often rose above the dead level of French rules; but unless a writer be satisfied, like Milton, with "fit audience though few," he must outwardly at least conform himself to the prevailing fashion of the time in some measure. Leaving the smaller writers, we will take as representative of this stage of English literature a great man, who, seeking his audience in his own time, did conform himself to the fashion of it. This was John Dryden.

John Dryden was born in the parsonage-house of Aldwincle in 1631. His father was a Puritan clergyman. He was educated at Westminster School, of which Dr. Busby was then head-master. In 1650 he gained a scholarship at Westminster, and went to Cambridge, where, in 1654, he took his degree of B.A. The same year his father died. Cromwell was at that time Protector; and a cousin of Dryden's, Sir Gilbert Pickering, was Lord Chamberlain of the Protector's Court, and a great friend of Cromwell's. Dryden came up to London, and seems to have lived in Sir Gilbert Pickering's house. In 1658 Cromwell died, and Dryden, who had already tried his skill in occasional verses, wrote an elegy on the Protector, which he called "Heroic Stanzas on the Death of Oliver Cromwell."

Dryden had been brought up to admire Cromwell, and his stanzas probably express the feeling which he thought was due to his memory; but great changes took place in England during the next eighteen months. The question of a republican or a monarchical government was discussed on every side; and it was a time when men had to answer the question each one for himself, according to his views of what was best. The whole tendency of Dryden's mind was always to bend itself to the rule of law and

authority; he attached himself to those who desired the return of the king, and welcomed the appearance of Charles II. with a poem, which he called "Astræa Redux."

The Restoration brought with it the re-opening of the theatres; but the French influence caused persons to look upon the old English plays of the Elizabethan time as barbarous and untrue to the principles of art. They wanted English comedies like the French comedies; and "heroic plays" in English, like those of the French dramatists. These so-called "heroic plays" were stories of Court intrigues with kings and queens, and other great personages for the characters; and in order to allow the fullest display of grandeur in the scenery and costumes, the scene was generally laid in some Eastern Court. They were written in the rhymed couplet of ten syllables, of which we have already spoken, and which was known as "the heroic measure." No new plays had been produced of late in England, and as the older dramatists did not suit the prevailing taste, there was plenty of work to do to supply the newly-opened theatres with plays written according to the later fashion. Dryden set himself to do this. He wrote two comedies, and began to make a "heroic play," in the writing of which he was joined by Sir Robert Howard. The play was called the *Indian Queen*, and while they were engaged upon it Dryden went with Sir Robert Howard to pay a visit to his father, the Earl of Berkshire, who had a house at Charlton, in Wiltshire. During this visit an attachment was formed between Dryden and his friend's sister, Elizabeth Howard, and in the following December they were married. The *Indian Queen* was brought out soon after, and was so successful that Dryden began to write other plays in the same style.

In 1665 the plague broke out in London, and Dryden and his wife went to Charlton, where they appear to have

remained for some time. The theatres now were closed, for during that terrible time of death in London few persons cared to go to places of amusement. The plague began in August; in September next year occurred the Great Fire of London; and a sea-fight with the Dutch, in which the English were successful, had taken place in June. All these events seemed to make the time a remarkable one, and Dryden, in the beginning of the year 1666, wrote a poem which he called "Annus Mirabilis," or the year of marvels. It was a clever, masterly account of the time, the serious events of which may have well stirred men's minds to earnestness. The time spent at Charlton seems also to have been occupied in discussing with Sir Robert Howard the merits of rhyme or blank verse for plays, and the French rules for dramatic art. These discussions were carried on afterwards with various friends, and the next year Dryden brought out, as the result of them, his "Essay of Dramatic Poesie." It was in the form of a dialogue, and gave the substance of his own arguments in favour of "heroic" verse; the French rules for the composition of a play and for the proper subjects for the drama were also discussed.

The theatres were now again open, and Dryden continued writing plays, which was the most successful way of earning money by literature at that time, when new pieces were so much in demand. Heroic plays were still the fashion, until, in 1671, the Duke of Buckingham brought out a very clever burlesque of them at the King's Theatre. The Duke of Buckingham's play was called the *Rehearsal*. It professes to show the way in which the artificial plays of the time were composed; and it ridicules the grand scenes, overdone action, and unreal sentiment of these plays, with their abundance of emperors, kings, and great nobles as characters, and their endless plots and counter-plots. The *Rehearsal* opens with a meeting in the streets of London between a

countryman, Smith, and a London friend of his, Johnson. Smith asks the news of the town, and Johnson tells him of the fashionable "heroic plays." Then Mr. Bayes, the play-maker, comes up. He represents in the burlesque the poets-laureate, Davenant and Dryden, and Sir Robert Howard, the three principal writers of heroic plays. He has a play in his pocket at that moment, and is just going to see it rehearsed; so he takes Smith and Johnson with him to the theatre. He tells them that "the hinge upon which this play turns" is that there are *two* kings of Brentford (two or three kings were often put on the stage at once), and the people are in a most refined difficulty how to express exactly the same amount of loyalty and devotion to each of them. (Difficulties of superfine sentiment formed always a leading feature of heroic plays.) The rehearsal begins. The play opens with a plot. The Court physician and gentleman usher conspire together, and seat themselves upon the two thrones of the two rightful kings. There are now *four* kings of Brentford. Prince Volscius has an army hidden at Knightsbridge, and is about to bring it to the rescue of the rightful kings; but as he is putting on his boots, he falls in love with Parthenope, who happens to pass at the moment. Now he cannot make up his mind whether to attend to the call of honour, and put on the other boot, or of love, and take off the one he has on. (Conflicts of contending sentiments were common in all heroic plays.) Prince Volscius cannot bring his inward conflict to any conclusion, and hops out with one boot on and the other off. Then a funeral is brought upon the stage; not that there is any necessity for it in the story of the play, but for the sake of a solemn effect. The two usurping kings come in, and are told it is Lardella's funeral. No one has heard of Lardella before, but the two kings were both in love with her, and each draws his sword and is about to kill himself, when Pallas enters and tells them Lardella is alive. Pallas has a pie in her helmet, a

cheese for a buckler, and from her lance flows "the purest wine of France." The kings begin to feast, when Drawcansir enters. He stands for the hero of one of Dryden's heroic plays, Almanzor, and also for the general false idea of heroism represented in all these plays. When one of the kings inquires, "What is this man that dares disturb our feast?" Drawcansir replies:—

> "He that dares drink, and for that drink dares die,
> And, knowing this, dares yet drink on, am I."

Then he snatches the bowls of wine away from the kings, and says:—

> "Whoe'er to gulp one drop of this dares think,
> I'll stare away his very power to drink."

The two kings immediately "sneak off the stage," while the *hero* goes on:—

> "I drink, I huff, I strut, look big and stare,
> And all this I can do because I dare."

Mr. Smith asks Mr. Bayes if this is the fierce hero he had told them of. "Yes," replies Mr. Bayes, "but this is nothing, you shall see him in the last act win above a dozen battles, one after another."

"But, Mr. Bayes," says Smith, "I thought heroes had ever been men of great humanity and justice." "Yes, they have been so," replies Mr. Bayes, "but, for my part, I prefer that one quality of singly beating of whole armies above all your moral virtues put together."

The last scene, Mr. Bayes tells them, is to be the grandest ever seen in England—"I do not mean for words, for those I do not value, but for state, show, magnificence." So in the last act appear the two usurping kings of Brentford, four cardinals, two princes, with heralds, sergeants-at-arms, and as many followers as can crowd the stage. The

two rightful kings of Brentford descend in the clouds sing ing, in white garments, and three fiddlers before them in green. The false kings slip off, and the rightful sovereigns alight from the clouds and sit upon their thrones. In the end a battle is fought with great shouting and noise, in the midst of which Drawcansir comes in and kills them all on both sides. Smith and Johnson have now had enough of a heroic play, and go off to their dinner.

The *Rehearsal* was of course an exaggerated burlesque of a heroic play, but it was full of allusions to plays well known at the time, and in some parts was scarcely more absurd than the scenes and sentiments it ridiculed. It appealed to the natural common sense of the people, and it exposed the false principle that substitutes glitter and show for real grandeur, and rude self-assertion and slaughter for heroism. It is remarkable that at the very time while people were laughing at Buckingham's ridicule of the so-called heroic plays, a real heroic play was published, but was scarcely recognised as such. This was Milton's *Samson Agonistes*—the strong man struggling through pain, loss, and shame, but lifting his head high above it all, assured through faith of the final victory of truth and right, and believing, even at the very worst, that—

> "All is best, though we oft doubt
> What the unsearchable dispose
> Of highest Wisdom brings about,
> And ever best found in the close."

The taste for heroic plays was not at once extinguished by the *Rehearsal*, but Dryden wrote only one more play of this kind. He was beginning to feel that in writing for money, and seeking, therefore, to adapt himself to the taste and principles of the time, he could not bring the best part of his nature into his work, nor make his work true to the highest purposes of literature. For though Dryden lived

among the vicious circle of the Court of Charles II., and wrote for the stage at that time, yet he was in himself more truly heroic than his plays, for his life was faithful to a higher standard; and not even his enemies, of which he had many, could make good any charge against his character or conduct.

He grew weary of play-writing to meet the popular demand. "I desire to be no longer the Sisyphus of the stage," he wrote, "to roll up a stone with endless labour (which to follow the proverb gathers no moss), and which is perpetually falling down again. I never thought myself fit for an employment where many of my predecessors have excelled me in all kinds, and some of my contemporaries, even in my own partial judgment, have outdone me in comedy. Some little hopes I have yet remaining, and these too, considering my abilities, may be vain, that I may make the world some part of amends for many bad plays by an heroic poem."

But the poet-laureate of Charles II., living in the atmosphere of his Court, had no free scope for working out the highest ideal; and though Dryden thought over various subjects, such as King Arthur and the Black Prince, the design remained as a dream in his own mind, and was not put into execution. A few years later, Dryden became occupied a good deal with the politics of the time. There was much excitement in England in regard to the "Exclusion Bill," which was intended to exclude the Duke of York from succession to the throne, on the ground of his being a Romanist; and there was a strong party which favoured the idea of placing the Duke of Monmouth on the throne. Amongst the partisans of Monmouth were Buckingham, the author of the *Rehearsal*, the Earl of Shaftesbury, and others who had been friends of the king. There was a strong feeling in many minds that, whatever had been the conduct of the king and the Duke of York, it was an act

of inexcusable treachery for the Duke of Monmouth, with Shaftesbury and Buckingham, to conspire against them. Dryden no doubt felt this, and in order to turn the current of popular feeling in this direction, he produced a powerful satire, into which he threw the energy of honest opinion and all his literary skill. He took the well-known story of treachery which has touched every heart, the rebellion of Absalom against David, and the going over to him of some of David's chief counsellors and friends. He called his poem "Absalom and Achitophel;" Absalom standing for Monmouth, Achitophel for Shaftesbury, David of course for Charles II. The Duke of Buckingham was represented by Zimri. Most of the leading characters of the time had their place in the satire—thus Cromwell was Saul, Titus Oates Corah, and the Roman Catholics and Nonconformists were Levites and Jebusites. It was published anonymously, and produced a great effect.

Shaftesbury had been committed to the Tower on a charge of high treason, and no doubt one of the objects which Dryden hoped his satire would accomplish was to influence the grand jury to find a true bill against him. It failed, however, to produce this effect, and a few days afterwards Shaftesbury was set free. There were great rejoicings in the country at this, for Shaftesbury was looked upon just then as a Protestant martyr, and to commemorate his release a medal was struck with the head of Shaftesbury on one side and the Tower on the other. These medals were worn by all who favoured the setting aside of the Duke of York from the succession to the throne. They called forth from Dryden another satire, "The Medal: a Satire against Sedition." This was also an attack on Shaftesbury, showing how far he was from being a Puritan hero.

Many answers were written to Dryden's satires; and one of these by Shadwell, a play-writer, was called "The

Medal of John Bayes: a Satire against Folly and Knavery," and consisted of a violent, coarse attack on Dryden himself. To this he replied by a satire on Shadwell, called "MacFlecknoe." Flecknoe had been an extremely poor poet, so that his name had become proverbial for any wretched attempts at verse. Dryden supposes him to have adopted Shadwell as his son, and as Flecknoe descended below, his poet's mantle of old drugget floated on to the shoulders of Shadwell. But Dryden's mind was not wholly occupied in annihilating his foes by his vigorous satire; his thoughts were now busy with the religious questions of the time, and living in the midst of violent religious disputes between Protestants and Romanists, and coming in contact also with the rising spirit of free inquiry and unbelief, he seems to have sought anxiously for some solid ground to rest upon. A month after the publication of "MacFlecknoe," Dryden brought out another poem called "Religio Laici," or the "Religion of a Layman." The drift of Dryden's mind at this time is shown in the very title of his poem, which distinguishes the religion of the laity as something different in degree, if not in kind, from the religion of the clergy. In fact, the tendency of the poem was to teach the evils of allowing the people to think for themselves on matters of religion; the learned only, he contended, should study the Bible, find out the doctrines revealed in it, and teach them to the people. The Bible had been misused by the clergy when the people could not read it, but now the ignorance of the people had led to worse abuses.

> "So all we make of Heaven's discovered will
> Is not to have it, or to use it ill.
> The danger's much the same, on several shelves
> If others wreck us, or we wreck ourselves.
> In doubtful questions, 'tis the safest way
> To learn what unsuspected ancients say;

For 'tis not likely we should higher soar
In search of Heaven than all the Church before;
Nor can we be deceived, unless we see
The Scripture and the Fathers disagree.
And after hearing what the Church can say,
If still our reason runs another way,
That private reason 'tis more just to curb,
Than by disputes the public peace disturb.
For points obscure are of small use to learn;
But common quiet is mankind's concern."

Dryden was certainly seeking earnestly to know the truth in religion; but the line which he took of trusting to the teaching of the Church naturally led him to seek for a Church which claimed to be an infallible guide; and thus a few years afterwards we find him resting in the Romish Church. Dryden's idea of a Church is expressed in the following lines, written after he had joined the Church of Rome:—

"What weight of ancient witness can prevail
If private reason hold the public scale?
But, gracious God, how well dost Thou provide
For erring judgments an unerring guide!
Thy throne is darkness in the abyss of light,
A blaze of glory that forbids the sight!
Oh, teach me to believe Thee thus concealed,
And search no farther than Thyself revealed,
But her alone for my director take,
Whom Thou hast promised never to forsake."

Dryden's next poem was produced as an argument in favour of the Romish Church. It was published in 1687, the same year in which James II. issued the Declaration of Indulgence. It was in the form of a fable, and was called "The Hind and the Panther." The sincerity of Dryden's religious convictions was shown in this poem, though it was timed to serve the cause of the Romanist king; but no one who was merely seeking self-interest, or drifting on the

current of the time, could have expressed the feeling Dryden did in the following lines of this poem :—

> " My thoughtless youth was winged with vain desires ;
> My manhood, long misled by wandering fires,
> Followed false lights ; and when their glimpse was gone,
> My pride struck out new sparkles of her own.
> Such was I ; such by nature still I am ;
> Be Thine the glory and be mine the shame."

The hind in the poem stands for the Church of Rome, as it appeared to Dryden :—

> " A milk-white hind, immortal and unchanged,
> Fed on the lawns, and in the forest ranged ;
> Without unspotted, innocent within,
> She feared no danger, for she knew no sin."

The panther was the Church of England, spotted since the Reformation, but still

> " The noblest next the hind,
> And fairest creature of the spotted kind.
> Oh, could her inborn stains be washed away,
> She were too good to be a beast of prey."

Other sects were represented by other animals : the Independents as the bear, Presbyterians the wolf, Quakers the hare, Freethinkers the ape, &c. James II. had the lion for his type, and he is ready to protect the hind from attacks of the other animals ; but when the others see that the milk-white hind is not in the least like the ten-horned beast, such as the wolf and panther had always described her, they begin to admire her, and the panther especially wishes for a nearer acquaintance They walk away together, and Dryden puts into the mouths of the two animals arguments for and against the Romish Church, those of the hind being, of course, the strongest and most convincing. The next year after the publication of " The Hind and Panther" came the Revolution, when James II. abdicated

the throne and William and Mary succeeded. Dryden could not take the oaths of allegiance and supremacy under the new sovereigns, and lost, therefore, his office of poet-laureate. Shadwell, the MacFlecknoe of his satire, was appointed in his place. The early days of William and Mary were dark days for Dryden. He had nothing to depend on but the labour of his brain for the support of his family; he was known to favour the Stuarts, and his religion made him unpopular; and he was exposed to the most violent attacks of many enemies, who were not afraid now to insult the great old man, whom they had feared in the days of his fame. Dryden had lived much in the popular current of his time, and he felt keenly the mortifications to which he was exposed; but he looked beyond the world now for favour and love, and wrote at this time—

> "If joys hereafter must be purchased here
> With loss of all that mortals hold so dear,
> Then welcome infamy and public shame,
> And last, a long farewell to worldly fame!
> 'Tis said with ease; but, oh, how hardly tried
> By haughty souls to human honour tied!
> Oh, sharp convulsive pangs of agonising pride!
> Down, then, thou rebel, never more to rise!
> And what thou didst and dost so dearly prize,
> That fame, that darling fame, make that thy sacrifice.
> 'Tis nothing thou hast given, then add thy tears
> For a long race of unrepenting years;
> 'Tis nothing yet, yet all then haste to give;
> Then add those maybe years thou hast to live;
> Yet nothing still; then poor and naked come,
> Thy Father will receive his unthrift home,
> And thy blest Saviour's blood discharge the mighty sum."

And so he set himself bravely to battle on, and do his work to the end. He wrote plays, made translations, brought out the opera of *King Arthur*, which he had written some years before.

In 1697 he was asked to write an ode for a musical society which always held a festival on St. Cecilia's Day. He wrote to his son, "This is troublesome, and no way beneficial; but I could not deny the stewards, who came in a body to my house to desire that kindness, one of them being Mr. Bridgeman, whose parents are your mother's friends." The ode was called "Alexander's Feast," and it describes how the conqueror of the world is himself subdued and led captive by the music of Timotheus, who with his lyre and song turns the world's conqueror to every mood and change of feeling at his will. It concludes—

"Thus long ago,
Ere heaving bellows learned to blow,
While organs yet were mute;
Timotheus to his breathing flute
And sounding lyre
Could swell the soul to rage, or kindle soft desire.
At last divine Cecilia came,
Inventress of the vocal frame.
The sweet enthusiast from her sacred store
Enlarged the former narrow bounds
And added length to solemn sounds,
With nature's mother-wit and arts unknown before.
Let old Timotheus yield the prize,
Or both divide the crown;
He raised a mortal to the skies,
She drew an angel down."

St. Cecilia was supposed to have invented the organ, and to have made such sweet music upon it that an angel used to come down from heaven to listen to it. The power of music is thus shown over heavenly beings, as well as over the great conqueror. The ode was much admired, and Dryden himself says of it: "I am glad to hear from all hands that my ode is esteemed the best of all my poetry by all the town; I thought so myself when I writ it, but being old, I mistrusted my own judgment."

A new demand was made on Dryden's industry at this time by the illness of his eldest son Charles. He had held an appointment in the household of the Pope, but was obliged by ill-health to return to England to his father. Dryden was ill himself, but he worked harder than ever, to meet the increased expense; and wrote, in allusion to his son's illness, "If it please God that I die of over-study, I cannot spend my life better than in preserving his."

Dryden made a contract with his publisher to supply 10,000 verses for 250 guineas; and in 1700 was published a book of "Fables in Verse," some of them versions of Chaucer's tales and other translations from the Latin and Italian. In his preface to this book Dryden writes some noble words in answer to attacks which had been made upon him in regard to the evil in some of his plays, which had been written for the stage of Charles II.'s time. After acknowledging the justice of the censure passed upon them, and his willingness to plead guilty, and retract every evil thought or expression, he says of his critic: "If he be my enemy, let him triumph; if he be my friend, as I have given him no personal occasion to be otherwise, he will be glad of my repentance. It becomes me not to draw my pen in the defence of a bad cause, when I have so often drawn it for a good one."

Of Dryden's way of life at this time we are told that he always spent the mornings in study; at two o'clock he dined with his family, and in the afternoon he went to Will's Coffee-house, where the literary men of the time used to meet, and spend a few hours in discussing subjects of literature and criticising new productions. A chair was always kept for Dryden: in the winter it was put in the warmest corner by the fire, and in the summer by the open balcony-window. Here the younger writers, of whom we shall soon speak, and who were now rising up to carry on the work, would gather round the old poet's chair and listen

reverently to his opinions on literary questions, and it was remarked that he was ever ready to welcome a new, young writer, and to receive with respect any opinions or criticisms from a younger man.

Dryden's last work was for his son Charles. He had resolved not to write any more plays; but on the promise of the third night's profits being given to his sick son, he consented to write a prologue and an epilogue to a play of Fletcher's, and a masque on the close of the seventeenth century.

Three weeks afterwards, on the 1st of May, 1700, John Dryden died.

CHAPTER XVI.

JOHN LOCKE AND SIR ISAAC NEWTON.

In order to understand the story of our English Literature from this period onward to the present day, we must try to have a clear idea of the kind of thoughts which were disturbing men's minds at this time, and giving rise to a conflict of opinions. We have seen that since the revival of learning, there had been constant questioning as to whether this or that thing had reached its highest ideal, and whether it could not be improved. Sir Thomas More's "Utopia" was an attempt to show how he thought all things in the State and in society might be changed for the better. On the other hand, there were those who, seeing the good in existing institutions, strove to preserve things as they were, fearing that in the change the good might be lost. In the discussions arising between these two parties, appeal was often made to higher authority, such as the customs of society, the laws of the country, or the commands of God. But at the time we have now reached, we find the conflict as to what was to be reformed and what was to be preserved unchanged passing into discussion about the foundations of authority itself. In this discussion three lines of thought are more particularly marked. The first arose out of the question—On what ground rests the authority of the laws and rulers of a country? The most celebrated writer on this question was John Locke.

Another line of thought sprang from the question—

Have the customs of society any other authority than an artificial state of civilisation, which is in itself an evil rather than a good? The earliest writers in England influenced by this idea were Gay and Mandeville.

Then the inquiry was pushed further, until this doubt arose—Seeing there is so much evil and misery in the world, can it be under the rule of a wise and good God, whose commands are the best laws of life? This question had no great supporter at this time in England; but Pope, the chief poet of his age, met the doubts which it expressed, and strove, like Milton, to rise "to the height of this great argument"—

> "Assert eternal Providence,
> And justify the ways of God to men."

Other thoughts which occupied men's minds at this time rose out of the application of Bacon's method for studying Nature. Bacon had shown that we can know nothing of Nature, excepting what we learn by observation and experiment; and in working on this method the question was started as to whether we can be said to really know anything at all, excepting the knowledge we gain of the outward world through our senses. In this is shown a reaction from the philosophy of Plato, which, ever since the revival of learning, had held sway over thought and literature, and which, as we have seen, taught that the chief source of knowledge is from the ideas which we bring into this world with us from a previous and perfect state of existence. On the question as to the source of knowledge, John Locke was again one of the first and chief writers.

John Locke was born at Wrington, in Somersetshire, on the 29th of August, 1632. At the time of his birth Charles I. had just entered on that course of arbitrary and illegal rule which a few years later brought on the Civil War. In the first year of Locke's life occurred the punish-

ment of Prynne, by loss of his ears, a fine of £5,000, and imprisonment for life, for writing a book against dancing and plays, of which the queen was very fond. The same year Wentworth went to Ireland to carry out there the king's ideas of despotic rule; and the same year also the "Book of Sports" was ordered by royal command to be read in the churches. When Locke was five years old those around him would be talking of Hampden's trial for refusal to pay ship-money, and of the royal proclamation forbidding the emigration of the Puritans to America, and of the attempt to force the English Liturgy on the Scots. In 1640 began the sittings of the Long Parliament, which for the next thirteen years formed the real government of England. When Locke was ten years old, he saw his father leave his home and go to join the Parliamentary army. Thus, from his earliest years, thoughts and discussions respecting the rights of kings and their peoples must have been constantly brought before him.

Locke was sent to Westminster School, and in 1651 went to Oxford. Here he studied Bacon's works, and began himself to seek for knowledge through observation and experiment. After leaving Oxford he became a physician, and an accidental introduction brought him into attendance on Lord Ashley, afterwards Earl of Shaftesbury. This nobleman, seeing Locke's power of dealing with questions of government, urged him to give up his practice and devote himself to politics. Locke, however, still continued his study of natural science, and became a member of the Royal Society. In 1670 he was living with Lord Ashley, and directing the education of his only son. With the exception of occasional visits to the Continent on account of his health, Locke was constantly with the Earl of Shaftesbury, until, from the part the earl took in the plan for excluding James from the throne, he was obliged to leave the country. Locke then went with him to Holland, and

after the death of Shaftesbury in 1683, he remained there until the accession of William III.

During these years Locke was busy at work upon his "Essay concerning Human Understanding," and he also wrote three letters in Latin "On Religious Toleration." In these Locke combated the idea that the oneness of Christ's Church is to consist in every one thinking alike. The oneness was to be the binding of all together in love, but not in opinion. A Church he thought might make laws which should exclude certain persons from belonging to it, but these persons were to suffer nothing in their civil or secular affairs by this exclusion. No Church had power from Christ to persecute any individuals, or other Churches, by withholding from them the right to worship God as they thought best. Whatever belonged of right to a citizen, as a citizen, could not be taken from him because as a Christian he differed from other Christians in his religious opinions.

Men of all religious parties were now beginning to see that this was the true way to the love and peace which Christ came to bring to earth, and especially enjoins on all His followers; and Locke's letters helped onward to the clearer understanding of those questions about the Church which had disturbed England ever since the Reformation.

In 1688 the Revolution was accomplished, and William III. made king. When all was settled a fleet was sent to bring Queen Mary from Holland to England, and in that fleet Locke came back to his native land. He had a Government office given to him, and he found a pleasant, happy home at Oates, in Essex, with Sir Francis and Lady Masham. They were both intellectual and highly educated, and could enter with sympathy and interest into Locke's deep thoughtfulness.

During the early years of William III.'s reign, the question as to the source from which kings derive their right to rule was keenly discussed. William had no hereditary right

to the throne, nor had Mary while her father and brother lived; but the English people had deposed James and made William king; did the king then derive his authority from the consent of his people?

Just before the Revolution in 1680 Sir Robert Filmer had published a book, called "Patriarcha," which was much read by the adherents of James II. The object of the work was to show that the power of the sovereign was given him by God, quite independently of his people. He said there never had been equality among men. When there were only two persons in the world, Adam had the right given him to rule Eve, and he was afterwards the head of his family. His authority was not given to him by those he ruled. From this Filmer argued that the authority of kings is an inherent right given them by God, like the authority of the father over his children, and that it could not be controlled or withdrawn by the people.

It was important that a good reply should be made to Filmer's book, because William III. had just come to the throne, and he held his right to rule on the choice of the nation. Locke was the greatest thinker of the time, and from his earliest childhood was familiar with all the arguments on the question, and he replied to Sir Robert Filmer's book. He showed that the relation of a father to a child, who needs protection and guidance from some one stronger and wiser, is not at all the same relation as that of the king to grown-up and reasonable men; and with regard to the authority given by God to Adam as ruler of the world, Locke pointed out that if it descended in the succession of eldest sons, that was completely lost, for Cain was Adam's eldest son, and all his descendants perished in the Flood.

This book was published in 1689; in the next year it was followed by another, "Treatise of Government." In this Locke laid down what he held to be the source of political authority, and showed how the necessity for

it arose, as soon as men began to work and acquire property. All men, he said, were naturally equal in power, and God had given the earth to all; but as soon as men began to labour, the most industrious got more by his labour than the idle. Then arose war, and the necessity for protection of the property acquired; for this purpose men agreed to form a government, and to place larger powers in the hands of some, that they might protect the property and rights of each man from those who would war upon them. The government may be the rule of a majority of the people themselves, as in a republic; or of a few of the chief men, as in an oligarchy; or of one, as in a monarchy; or by the union of all three forms, as in England. But a tyranny is not a real government, because it is one man making war on the property and rights of others; and the end of all government is to prevent this. The people cannot be taxed without their own consent, because that would be government making war upon their property, and defeat again the object of its appointment. The power thus given by the people into the hands of some of their number, or into the hands of one sovereign, could be at any time taken away again whenever its purpose failed, for all rulers are responsible to the people for the trust reposed in them.

In Locke's treatises on government he took Hooker's argument, which he had used in the "Ecclesiastical Polity," in order to answer objections raised against Episcopacy. Hooker urged that the object of all government was to enable a man to do his duty without hindrance, and to fulfil the will of God. In making laws men used their own reason according to the necessities of the case.

For many years Locke had been busy on his great work on the Understanding, and during the time he was living at Oates he finished it. In 1690 the four books into which it was divided were published. The next year he resigned his Government office, and gave himself to the

study of the Bible, in the spirit of simple, earnest desire to understand its teaching. In 1704 he died, at the age of seventy-three. The object of Locke's book on the "Human Understanding" was to stop vain discussions about things of which, he believed, men could not obtain any accurate knowledge. He held, that when we enter this world the mind is a blank: we bring with us no ideas of God, or notions of the perfect types of things, as Plato had taught; thus we learn everything in this world and from this world. It is only through the senses that we come into contact with the world around us, and therefore all our knowledge is gained through the senses, or has been gained for us by others in the same way. The mind having received the knowledge may form ideas from it through reflection. From the world around us the knowledge of God might be gained, "for," said Locke, "the visible marks of extraordinary wisdom and power appear so plainly in all the works of the Creation, that a rational creature, who will but seriously reflect on them, cannot miss the discovery of a God." But though the reasoning of Locke made him affirm "that we more certainly know that there is a God than that there is anything else without us," he was also fully assured in his own mind that the Bible is a revelation from God, declaring His own existence and relation to us; God left us to find out from the world around us knowledge for this life; what relates to a life beyond our experience God has revealed to us, and, "we may as well doubt of our own being, as we can whether any revelation from God be true." It was in the strength of faith joined with clear energy of reason that Locke studied the Bible, and wrote during the later years of his life two books, one on the "Reasonableness of Christianity, as delivered in the Scriptures," and another on the Epistles of St. Paul.

When Locke asserted that the knowledge of God could

be discovered from the study of Nature, he held at the same time that there is a fuller, higher knowledge of God revealed in the Bible, and that even this does not nearly exhaust all that God is, or explain all that He does. The line of thought suggested by Locke in regard to the means by which we arrive at knowledge, was carried on by other thinkers, who, excluding revelation, asserted that no knowledge was possible but that gained through the action of the senses on the outward world.

In the meantime there were honest, patient students of the outward world of Nature who, following Bacon's method, were diligently seeking to find out the elements and laws of Nature by experiment and observation, without attempting to draw any immediate conclusions from them. Amongst these the most prominent man of that time was Isaac Newton. His scientific discoveries belong to the history of science rather than to the history of literature; but Sir Isaac Newton has also a place in literature through the merit of his writings. He was born at Woolsthorpe Manor, on Christmas Day, 1642, the year during which had begun the civil war between Charles I. and the Parliament. In 1660 he entered Cambridge, and took his degree there four years after. His great study was mathematics, and he made discoveries in this science which led to the method now employed in making calculations as to the movements of the heavenly bodies. He also employed himself in making lenses; and by observations with a prism, he was led to form the theory of the different-coloured rays combined in a beam of light. It was during these years also that Newton, while studying the movements of the heavenly bodies, began to suspect the law of gravitation, but this idea was more strongly impressed upon his mind as he watched an apple one day fall from a tree to the earth in the orchard at Woolsthorpe. Reasoning from the known tendency of all bodies to fall to the earth, he

became convinced of the law that all larger bodies attract smaller.

While Newton was thus carefully watching and studying Nature, he was in no hurry to proclaim his discoveries to the world, or to make out from them theories of his own in regard to the universe. He seems to have felt overwhelmed by the infinite amount of knowledge necessary to form one perfectly accurate conclusion; and the only confident conviction he arrived at was a deeper sense of the power and wisdom of God, as shown in all the facts and phenomena of the universe. He joined with his study of the works of God in creation a reverent study of the revelation of God in the Bible, as the moral governor of men, and ruler of life and its changeful histories. With a remembrance, perhaps, of Milton's lines in "Paradise Regained," where Christ speaks of the student—

> "Who reads
> Incessantly, and to his reading brings not
> A spirit and judgment equal or superior,
> Uncertain and unsettled still remains;
> Deep versed in books, and shallow in himself,
> Crude or intoxicate, collecting toys,
> And trifles for choice matters, worth a sponge,
> As children gathering pebbles on the shore"—

Newton said at the close of his life: "To myself I seem to have been as a child picking up stones on the seashore, while the great ocean of truth lay unexplored before me."

The great work in which Newton explained his theory of gravitation was not published until 1687. It is generally known as "The Principia." It is written in Latin, so that students of different nations might read it. The whole title in English would be "The Mathematical Principles of Natural Philosophy."

After having pursued his observations on light for more than thirty years, he published in 1704 his work on

"Optics: a Treatise of the Reflections, Refractions, Inflections, and Colours of Light."

Newton died in 1727, and after his death was found to have left a great number of notes and papers on Biblical subjects, the results of his constant and thoughtful study of the Bible. His "Observations upon the Prophecies of Holy Writ" was published after his death.

CHAPTER XVII.

PROSE WRITERS: DE FOE, SWIFT, STEELE, AND ADDISON (1688—1745).

THE later years of the seventeenth century and the earlier part of the eighteenth were a period of much vigour in prose literature. The deeper struggle for freedom was now over; the great questions which had stirred the very hearts of the English people in the first half of the seventeenth century, and which had brought out the lyric poetry of the time of Charles I. and the Commonwealth, were settled. The political and religious strife had now become one of parties, rather than of great ideas; and whilst in this there was much excitement, there was little enthusiasm or poetry of feeling.

With the French influence there had come into England a taste for short, clever papers, or essays, written with much finish of style, and dealing with subjects of general interest in a clear form, and with a vein of satire running through them. Every writer must so far accommodate himself to the taste of his time, as to put what he has to say into such a form as will be the most readily received, and we shall find this form of prose literature was turned to good account by the greatest men of this time.

The first in age of this group of writers was Daniel De Foe, who is also so well known as the first great English novelist. He was born in London in 1661, and was the son of a butcher. His father was a nonconformist, and

De Foe was educated by a Mr. Morton, who afterwards went out to New England and became vice-president of Harvard College. At twenty-four De Foe took part in Monmouth's rebellion, and was at the battle of Sedgemoor. He managed to escape after the battle, and went to Spain and Portugal, where he stayed for two years. On his return to England, James II. was making use of arbitrary power to set aside the persecuting laws of Charles II. in order thereby to benefit Roman Catholics. Although De Foe, as a dissenter, benefited by the king's taking upon himself to dispense with these laws, he saw that it was an action full of danger to the State, because if it were taken as a precedent, other laws might also be dispensed with, and there would be no security in any Act of Parliament. De Foe, therefore, wrote three tracts against this proceeding of the king; and in these he showed that love of truth and independent justice which through life were always dearer to him than the triumph of any particular party.

Soon after this De Foe married, and became engaged in business in London. All this time his mind was busy with plans for the improvement of many things he saw to be wrong, and being obliged through losses in his business to leave London and go to Bristol, he there wrote his "Essay on Projects." In this book he suggests many things, which have since been adopted, and many others, still under discussion. Some of these are:—A Savings Bank for the Poor, Insurance Offices, An Asylum for Idiots, Friendly Societies, and a College for the Higher Education of Women. He closes a number of arguments in favour of this last—arguments that have lain dormant for nearly two hundred years—by saying, "I need not enlarge on the loss the defect of education is to women, nor argue the benefit of the contrary practice; it is a thing will be more easily granted than remedied. This chapter is not an essay at the thing, and I refer the practice to those happy days, if

ever they shall be, when men shall be wise enough to mend it." After De Foe's return to London he took the management of Tile Works at Tilbury. The struggle of religious opinions had become very much a strife of parties, and this rose into greater violence in Queen Anne's reign. De Foe saw how strong was the spirit of intolerance on both sides, and how useless were the measures intended to force persons into one outward Church; he wrote therefore in 1703 a very clever satire, which he called "The Shortest Way with the Dissenters." He assumes for himself the character of an extreme churchman; one who has no question but that there should be only one form of religion in England, and that form should be his own. Under this character De Foe shows, with strict justice, how the Puritans had used persecution to carry out their idea of making England wholly Puritan, and now the time had come when England was to be made wholly Episcopalian. But how, he asks, is this to be done? To fine a man a shilling, because he stayed away from church, only brought in shillings, but not dissenters; they remained where they were before, as numerous as ever, and outside of the Church. There was but one way to really secure the unity of the Church, urged De Foe, in his assumed character of the intolerant churchman, and that was by getting rid of the dissenters altogether. Let them all be sent as a body out of the country, and all their ministers be hanged, then every one in England would belong to the one Church. If any one should object by saying that the dissenters were a great part of the nation, and might refuse to be turned out of their own country, this is answered by urging that the more numerous, the more dangerous; that they are not so numerous as they pretend; that at all events the plan should be tried. Or if it should appear to some an unmerciful act; "is it," asks the intolerant churchman, "unmerciful to kill a serpent, a toad, a viper? it is an act of mercy to our neighbours; much more to get

rid of those who poison the soul, corrupt our life, and destroy our peace."

De Foe meant to show here what the spirit of intolerance would lead to if it were fully carried out, so that we could not endure to live among those who differ from us in religious opinions; but he did not suspect that the extreme churchmen of that time would receive his suggestion as a real proposal, and highly approve of it, while the dissenters, on the other hand, also took it as earnest, and were alarmed at the bold suggestion. A Fellow of one of the colleges in Cambridge wrote: "I join with that author in all he says—I pray God put it into her Majesty's heart to put what is there proposed in execution."

The fact that both parties at first accepted the satire as an actual suggestion, and did not perceive that it was intended to show the injustice which lay at the very heart of intolerance, is an indication of how little the spirit of toleration was understood on either side. When it was discovered what was the real object of the book, both parties were indignant at the writer, who had so cleverly carried out the wrong principle to its true conclusions. De Foe had to fly from his opponents and his friends, and a reward of £50 was offered to any one who should find him. In the proclamation offering this reward, he is described as "a middle-sized spare man, about forty years old, of a brown complexion, and dark brown hair (but wears a wig); a hooked nose, a sharp chin, grey eyes, and a large mole near his mouth." No one gained the £50, for De Foe, finding the printer of the pamphlet had been seized, voluntarily gave himself up. He was sentenced to stand three times in the pillory, to pay 200 marks (nearly £67), and to be imprisoned in Newgate during the queen's pleasure.

De Foe was put in the pillory, but pilloried his persecutors in his sturdy "Hymn to the Pillory," in which he showed how impossible it for a clear conscience and

honest mind to feel any false shame at an undeserved disgrace.

Whilst in Newgate, De Foe wrote busily on the political questions of the time with the same impartial justice and love of truth which always distinguished him. He also began a newspaper, to be published at first weekly, then twice, and afterwards three times a week. The very title of this little paper is thoroughly characteristic of De Foe—"A Weekly Review of the Affairs of France, purged from the errors and partialities of News-writers and petty-statesmen of all sides." In the introduction he declares some of its objects to be to set the affairs of Europe in a clearer light—there are to be no "stories of great victories when we are beaten." "If we are beaten, we shall not be ashamed to own it, and if we conquer we shall not be afraid to say so. As we shall be impartial to our own relators, so we shall find occasion to take in pieces the particular accounts given by the enemies, and divert the reader sometimes with the rhodomontade of the French. Nor shall we embroil ourselves with parties, but pursue the Truth; find her out, when a crowd of lies and nonsense has almost smothered her, and set her up so as she may be both seen and heard. After our serious matters are over, we shall at the end of every paper present you with a little diversion, as anything occurs to make the world merry; and whether friend or foe, one party or another, if anything happens so scandalous as to require an open reproof, the world may meet with it there."

The *Review* differed from the Gazettes and News-letters of the day, not only in its seeking to tell the truth rather than to tell astounding news, but in its comments and criticisms on the events of the time; so it is important as being the real beginning of the English Press, which gives free expression to the mind of the nation on politics. The "little diversion" at the end of the paper became also powerful, as a criticism on the follies and evils prevailing in

society. Many matters were introduced into this little supplement of the *Review* by letters, supposed to be written by different persons, asking for advice under particular circumstances. Then there was an imaginary club, called the Scandal Club, before which these letters were supposed to be laid and discussed, and the decisions of the club were reported in the *Review*. By this means De Foe hoped to do some good to the family and social life of the people, and we shall see how the idea was afterwards used with great effect in the *Tatler* and *Spectator*. The taste of the time for satires and for short sketches of life and society was thus met, and turned to good and wholesome account.

De Foe's imprisonment in Newgate was probably not very severe, but it injured his business at the Tile Works, and it gave him leisure for writing, which he used steadily and industriously. From this time he seems to have worked with his pen, and have given little further attention to business. He wrote on a great variety of subjects, and always with a straightforward honesty and a clear, just sense of things which kept him quite aloof from the one-sided party spirit of the times. Some of the subjects which he thus dealt with were—the principles of Political Economy and Free Trade; the Union between England and Scotland; the Test Acts and the history of parties and persecutions in England; the morality of Trade; the Training of Children at Home, and the different family relations; "the way to make London the most flourishing city in the Universe"—this was a plan for establishing a university in London, where the students were to live with their friends or in their own homes.

Besides these writings, far-seeing and full of originality, De Foe took up again the writing of novels, which had been begun in Elizabeth's reign but had fallen into disuse in English literature. He saw how fiction might become of the greatest service to truth and life, if it faithfully repre-

sented characters and scenes, and was in strict accordance with the laws that govern life. His intense reality and love of truth would have made him shrink from representing in his fictions an unreal world, subject to conditions unlike those that govern life, and filled with inconsistent or purely imaginary characters; he would have felt this a breach of truth, and a pure falsehood. At the same time, the power which a fictitious story, even when it is openly known to be imaginary, has over those who read it, was then very little suspected, and De Foe seems to have considered it necessary, in order to give weight to the inner purpose of his stories, that they should be read as real histories. He therefore took every pains to give them this character. He had been in the habit of illustrating the truth of his assertions in his other writings by appeals to facts which had come under his own observation or had been related to him, and his stories are perhaps in most cases the enlargement of some occurrence in real life which he had come across in his own very varied experience. He therefore felt at starting that he had hold of some actual facts, and he considered that the truthful, careful way in which he worked these out did not make them fiction, or stand in the way of his declaring his story to be a true history. He was able to give this impression more completely than many novelists, because he possessed the power in a remarkable degree of throwing himself into the character of his hero, and writing wholly from that point of view even when it was quite different from his own. We have seen how he did this in "The Shortest Way with the Dissenters."

De Foe may be considered the first writer of novels which represented the real life of the people. The older romances dealt entirely with the adventures of knights and nobles, and the feelings expressed were those of overstrained sentiment; but De Foe showed how the common real events of life might be artistically treated, so as to present a

vivid picture to the imagination, and how also the truest poetry lay in the simplest feelings.

The first of De Foe's novels was "Robinson Crusoe." This is the history of a man who starts in life with the determination to gratify his own inclinations and follow his own self-will, instead of making duty his guide. He is bent on a life of adventure and excitement; and casting off the love and duty he owes to his father and mother, he runs off to sea. This is not the honest choice of a seafaring life, as the means of earning his bread, for he says: "Having money in my pocket, and good clothes on my back, I would always go on board in the habit of a gentleman; and so I neither had any business in the ship nor learned to do any." It was the wilful choice of an idle, roving life, instead of one of steady work and duty.

Robinson Crusoe begins his seafaring life as a trader to Guinea for gold-dust, and gets taken prisoner by a Turkish pirate, and is made a slave. Then he makes his escape in a boat with "a shoulder-of-mutton sail," and takes with him the boy Xury; but suffers the greatest hardships for many days for want of food and water; and on landing at any time on the coast is exposed to dangers from wild beasts and savages. From this he is rescued by a ship going to the Brazils. He sells Xury to the captain of the ship as a slave, and determines to become a planter. Here he wants men for the work, and engages with some other planters to go across secretly in a ship to the Guinea coast, and steal, or purchase with beads and toys, a cargo of negroes for their slaves. He sets sail on this voyage on September the 1st, the same day of the month as that on which he had left his father and mother some years before. About twelve days after comes the terrible storm, in which all the crew perished, and Robinson Crusoe found himself cast on shore, the only inhabitant of a desert island. De Foe has now shown the evil which has resulted from Robinson

Crusoe's acting always under the self-will of the moment, with no regard to duty as his guide in life. But he does not leave his hero here, for the great purpose of his story had only been half accomplished. He has to show how a man who has started in life on utterly wrong principles may yet learn the true lesson, and rise through the very suffering he has brought upon himself into a faithful, noble life of love to God, of patience, and right-doing.

Crusoe's first thoughts are only of the misery of his condition. He runs about the shore wringing his hands, and crying, "I am undone, undone!" He calls the island the "Island of Despair," and sees nothing but death before him. The natural instinct of self-preservation leads him to do what he can to supply the necessaries of life—food and shelter. Then sickness comes, and he can no longer help himself, and is utterly alone, and face to face with death. In the midst of his complete helplessness and misery he feels that need of God which comes over us at all times of desolation and difficulty, and the first prayer he had uttered for many years rises from his lips, "Lord, be my help, for I am in great distress." He takes the Bible he had found in the ship, and reads, "Call upon me in the day of trouble, and I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me." At first he takes the words to mean only deliverance from the desolate island. "But soon," he says, "I learned to take it in another sense; now I looked back on my past life with such horror, and my sins appeared so dreadful, that my soul sought nothing of God but deliverance from the sin that bore down all my comfort. As for my solitary life, it was nothing; I did not so much as pray to be delivered from it, or think of it; it was all of no consideration in comparison with this. And I add this part here to hint to whoever shall read it, that whenever they come to a true sense of things they will find deliverance from sin a much greater blessing than deliverance from affliction."

De Foe then shows how happiness may be found under circumstances the least favourable; and how every position, the most isolated and narrow, has its duties, its work that is worth doing, its ideal life of highest aim. Crusoe in his desert island is no miserable castaway, but a brave man, fighting the good fight of faith under the most trying circumstances; able to say at length, "I thought I lived very happily in all things, excepting that of society." His life becomes a life of duty, and of busy, skilful work, and thus a life fulfilling its true end. "I was very seldom idle," he says, "but having regularly divided my time according to the several daily employments that were before me: such as, first, my duty to God, and the reading the Scriptures, which I constantly set apart some time for thrice every day; secondly, going abroad with my gun for food, which generally took me up three hours every morning; thirdly, ordering, curing, preserving, and cooking what I had killed. These took up great part of the day. About four hours in the evening I gave to work of various kinds, exceeding laborious for want of tools, want of help, and want of skill: for instance, I was full two-and-forty days making me a board for a shelf; but labour and patience carried me through that, and many other things."

At length Crusoe's solitude is broken by his finding Friday, the savage left upon the island; and now the narrow sphere of duty is enlarged by the presence of another human being; and De Foe shows how Robinson Crusoe's work rises from the labour of providing himself with the necessaries of life, to the work of enlightening and teaching another human soul, and with this come all the deeper joys that such service brings. "When I reflected," he says, "that in this solitary life which I had been confined to, I had not only been moved to look up to Heaven myself, and to seek the hand that brought me here, but was now to be made an instrument under Providence to save the life, and, for aught

I knew, the soul of a poor savage, and bring him to the true knowledge of religion and of the Christian doctrine, that he might know Jesus Christ, in whom is life eternal; I say, when I reflected on all these things, a secret joy ran through every part of my soul, and I frequently rejoiced that ever I was brought to this place, which I had so often thought the most dreadful of all afflictions that could possibly have befallen me."

In the intercourse between Robinson Crusoe and Friday, the complete oneness and brotherhood of the human race is shown, notwithstanding differences caused by climate and want of earlier culture. "The conversation which employed the hours between Friday and me was such as made the three years which we lived together perfectly and completely happy. This savage was now a good Christian, a much better than I; though I have reason to hope and bless God for it, that we were equally penitent, and comforted, restored penitents. The same plain instruction sufficiently served to the enlightening this savage creature, and bringing him to be such a Christian as I have known few equal to him in my life. As to all the disputes, wrangling, strife, and contention which have happened in the world about religion, whether niceties in doctrine or schemes of Church government, they were all perfectly useless to us, and for aught I can yet see, they have been so to the rest of the world. We had the sure guide to heaven, viz., the Word of God, the Spirit of God teaching and instructing us by His Word, leading us into all truth, and making us both willing and obedient to the instruction of His Word."

De Foe thus represents in "Robinson Crusoe" the ideal of the true life in its very simplest form, such as even the poorest and most ignorant could understand and sympathise with; for no individual could be more destitute, no sphere more narrow; and yet such a life is to be glorified and

made noble by its truth to all its duties. The story appeals purely to man as man, apart from the various conditions of life; it deals with the actual needs of humanity, and not with the fancied necessities or artificial difficulties of a particular class. And in this we find the secret of its wide and long-lived popularity, for the truth of its principles is universal and eternal, and the simplicity of the picture of life it represents is such as every person at every age, in every rank, and under all circumstances can recognise and understand.

De Foe wrote other novels after "Robinson Crusoe," equally vivid and accurate as pictures of life; but they were pictures of special phases of human life, and of the special time in which he was living. None of them, therefore, have the general interest of "Robinson Crusoe."

The later days of De Foe were troubled and lonely. Like most men who hold aloof from any party, and give equal justice to all, he had few friends and many enemies. His interests were wide and patriotic, rather than personal; and his own affairs had been neglected in his work for others' good. A short time before his death, when he was ill and in trouble, he wrote to his son-in-law, "I would say, I hope with comfort, that 'tis yet well I am so near my journey's end, and am hastening to the place where the weary are at rest, and where the wicked cease to trouble; be it that the passage is rough, and the day stormy, by what way soever He pleases to bring me to the end of it, I desire to finish life with this temper of soul in all cases—Te Deum laudamus." With this note of praise amid the storm, Daniel De Foe entered "the desired haven."

We now turn to another great prose-writer of this time, Jonathan Swift. His father was poor, and was in difficulties when he died, and his mother was taken by his father's brother, Godwin Swift, to his house in Hoey's Court, Dublin, where she found a home. Here, a short time after his

father's death, Jonathan Swift was born, on the 30th of November, 1667. Before he was a year old his nurse, who was an Englishwoman, had to return to her family, and, unknown to the baby's mother or uncle, she carried him off with her to Newhaven, because she could not bear to part with him. His mother left him with her till he was three years old, and then he was brought back to Ireland. Meantime his nurse had taught him to read, so that on his return he could read any chapter in the Bible. He was no doubt a quick, clever little boy, but he was sickly, and he seems to have felt even in childhood something of the sadness which hung over his later years. At six years old Jonathan Swift was sent to school at Kilkenny, and his mother went to live with some relations of hers in Leicestershire. He was thus, as a little child, deprived of that tenderness and love which surrounds almost all children in their early homes, and had to fight his own way at once in the roughness of the world. There was in him by nature a depth of tenderness and affection, but at this time it must have been almost entirely repressed. At fourteen he left school, and entered the University of Dublin. Here he remained for nearly seven years. Of his work during that time, he says that he felt so discouraged as regards his future life, that he did not give himself with earnestness to the special studies needed for his degree, but read with more eagerness history and poetry, finding in them no doubt that human interest that was wanting in his real life. In 1686 he received his B.A. degree, and in 1688 he left Dublin, and came to Leicester to his mother.

Mrs. Swift was a distant relation of the wife of Sir William Temple, and she recommended her son to apply to him for help in finding some employment. Sir William Temple was now living in retirement at Moor Park, near Farnham, a house he had built for himself in a lonely part of Surrey, with gardens and terraces laid out in the stiff

Dutch style, then in fashion. Here Swift went in the summer of 1689, and for the next five years he lived with Sir William Temple, only leaving him for occasional absences, such as when he went to Oxford to take his M.A. degree, or was sent to Ireland for his health.

At Moor Park there lived at that time, besides Sir William and Lady Temple, Lady Giffard (Sir William's sister), and a Mrs. Johnson, who was her friend or companion. This lady had a little girl named Esther, who when Swift went there was about six years old. She was a sickly, delicate little child, with black hair, and large dark eyes; and Swift, who was naturally affectionate and tender-hearted, and whose own childhood had been so lonely and loveless, was drawn to the little thing with pity and kindness. He became her big playfellow and teacher. She could not speak distinctly, and they talked to one another in her childish language. He taught her to read, and guided her little hand in forming the letters in her copy-book. He taught her, also, to be truthful and good, and many years afterwards he could say that from these principles she "never swerved in any one action or moment of her life." He brought help and happiness to her by teaching her to understand and enjoy things, of which otherwise she would probably have remained ignorant, and he thus made her life richer and brighter; while she, by her childlike love and pretty, merry ways, became to him a little star of light, shining in the midst of the dark clouds which hung over his mind and life. He called her his Stella, or star; and what she was to him in childhood she remained, ever constantly the same, through the long years of a troubled life, while he was always her teacher, her guardian, and helper. They often talked and wrote to one another, too, in the same childish language that she spoke when first he saw her, and which he used to imitate in playing with her.

It was during the time that Swift lived at Moor Park

that he first began to suffer from those attacks of giddiness in his head which later on became more and more serious, ending at last in the brain disease which made his last years a fearful blank. A foreboding of this loss of intellect, and perhaps a consciousness that the brain was liable to become diseased, seem to have cast a cloud over his mind even at that time, and prevented the full enjoyment of life. He seems to have felt also a want of thorough, definite employment, such as might lead to his making his way in the world. He did not, however, spend these five years in idleness. He read to Sir William Temple, wrote for him, and kept his accounts. He also made verses after the fashion of the time, and wrote papers on various subjects as a kind of practice for his pen. Sir William Temple was himself a thinker and a writer, and he had a good library, of which Swift made frequent use; the society also which he met at Moor Park was in itself a kind of culture. Among the visitors who came to Moor Park was William III., and on such occasions Swift was sometimes in attendance upon the king, and walked with him in the gardens, where the king showed him how the Dutch cut asparagus. The king offered to make him a captain of horse; but Swift did not intend to be a soldier, he had made up his mind to enter the Church, and in 1694 he left Moor Park, and was ordained a few months afterwards. The Lord Deputy of Ireland gave him a small prebend at Kilroot, in the north of Ireland, near Belfast. It was a miserable little out-of-the-way place, the church and parsonage in ruins, and Swift stayed here only one year; he missed, no doubt, the intellectual sympathy and society at Moor Park, and as Sir William Temple also wished him back again, he returned after about a year and a half's absence.

When Swift returned to Moor Park, Esther Johnson was fifteen years old. She was still living there, as well as her mother and another relative, Mrs. Dingley; and Swift again

became Esther Johnson's teacher and friend, lending her books to read, and giving her culture in many ways. She owed to him the development of her mind, and that wider view of things and increase of resources which knowledge gives, and she was thus indebted to him for the greatest treasures of her life. Without his kindly interest and teaching her existence would probably have been only that of an ignorant and idle dependent on Lady Giffard, but he gave her life its richness and fulness of interest and woke in her all that was unselfish and elevating, and she could not but feel the strongest bond of gratitude to him. To Swift himself she became more and more the clear, bright star of his life, shining through the dark gloom that so often clouded his mind; and her happy disposition and ready wit, her calm and cheerful mind, served, no doubt, to drive off for many years the utter darkness of insanity which he felt hung over him.

Swift spent much time at Moor Park in hard reading and study, and he was also engaged in writing for Sir William Temple. There was a controversy going on at that time between some of the writers of the day, as to the respective merits of the ancient or modern authors. Sir William Temple took the side of the ancients, and Swift, in support of his patron, wrote a humorous satire, which he called the "Battle of the Books." The books in Sir William's library at Moor Park were supposed to come to life, and a grand battle went on among them. Homer and Virgil came down with great weight upon some of the poets of the time, who were crushed or fled before them; and so the combat raged, but it was interrupted by another dispute which was taking place in the library window. In a deep corner of the window a spider had made a web; he had spun it carefully out of himself, and now he sat in the midst of his work self-exalted and admiring what he had done. He bids all observe how carefully and cleverly he had spun the lines,

each so well measured and in its place, how he had attended to every artistic rule, and had drawn all the materials out of himself. Meanwhile, in the midst of the spider's boasting, a bee comes through a hole in the window-pane, and alights on the spider's web. The web shakes, and the spider believes that the world is coming to an end, or that Beelzebub, the god of flies, is about to avenge upon him the many flies he has entrapped and devoured. Presently he perceives the bee, and in reply to his boast of all the clever work he has produced from himself, the bee answers by glorying only in his wings and in his voice, the powers which enable him to pass through the whole realm of Nature, and to gather from her the delicious honey and the useful wax, materials by which he can thus "furnish mankind with the two noblest things, which are Sweetness and Light."

In January, 1699, Sir William Temple died, and his death ended Swift's life at Moor Park. He left Swift a small legacy, and the profit arising from the arranging and publishing of his MSS., and he left to Esther Johnson some lands in the County of Wicklow. Her mother had married again, and she went to live with Mrs. Dingley near Farnham, and close also to Moor Park. Swift went to Ireland, as chaplain to Lord Berkeley, and lived for a while in the Castle at Dublin; but after some disappointments, the living of Laracor was given to him, while he still retained the chaplaincy at the Castle. He worked hard in his parish, which had been much neglected. The church was in decay, and the vicarage uninhabitable; but Swift out of his income repaired both, brought them into decent order, and established daily service.

In 1700 Lord Berkeley was recalled, and, soon after, Swift went to London on a visit. During his stay there he went to Farnham to see Esther Johnson and Mrs. Dingley. He found that the income Esther Johnson derived from the Irish property Sir William Temple had left her was small,

and would go but a little way in England, where things were very dear; but in Ireland living was then very cheap, and she would be better able there to look after the property itself. Mrs. Dingley could derive increase of income from investing her small property in Ireland, where money was paying ten per cent. It was settled, therefore, that they should remove to Ireland immediately, and they went over to Dublin, leaving Swift to finish his business in London. Beside the advantage of being able to increase their income, and at the same time to live more economically, there was, of course, the consideration that the old relation of pupil and master might be still kept up between Esther Johnson and Swift, that she might on her part still enjoy that help and culture, and that kindly care and guardianship, which already made him her best friend in the world; whilst in return she could give him just that sympathy and cheerful devotion which kept him from yielding to the darkness and despair of a diseased mind.

So from this time Esther Johnson, or Stella, as Swift called her, had her home near Swift, and they maintained through life the same relation of master and pupil, or father and child, which had begun when Swift was Sir William Temple's secretary at Moor Park, and she was a little child, hardly able to speak plainly. It has been sometimes asked why Swift did not make Esther Johnson his wife. But the best answer to this is, that he had the fear of sinking into insanity always hanging over him, and she might find herself left as a young woman to live for many years the wife of a husband who had lost his reason. Swift did not wish to prevent her from marrying any one she chose, and at one time there was some idea of her marriage to a Mr. Tisdall, a clergyman, but it did not come to anything; probably Esther Johnson felt that she would rather be the comfort and light of Swift's lonely life than the wife of any one else, and was perfectly happy to be able to do all she could for him.

Swift was generally in London for some months of nearly every year, and during these absences he kept a kind of journal in which he wrote every day. He would fancy that he was sitting talking to Stella and Mrs. Dingley, and that he hears them say, "Well, come now, let us hear all you have been doing;" and then he begins telling them, in the playful, merry way he used when he was with them, keeping up all the little jokes they had together, full of fun, and full of kindness too, interested in all that they had been doing, and always pleased when he found they had been having any pleasure. Very often he writes in the little baby language in which he and Stella used to talk when he was at Moor Park.

It was during these years, and while Swift was in London, that he brought out a work he had written some time before, and which he called "The Tale of a Tub." The title means any nonsense story, and was used as we use the expression, "A cock and bull story." It was a satirical allegory, in which the three chief religious parties of the time are described as three brothers: Peter, who stands for the Romanists; Martin, for the Church of England; and Jack, for the Puritans. They each have a coat, left them by their father, and a copy of their father's will, giving them directions for the wearing and management of these coats. The coats represent the outward forms of religion. At first these coats are all alike, and the brothers live in harmony together. They keep their father's will, and go into various countries, fighting and destroying monsters and giants (the heathen religions). Then they come to town, and fall under the influence of its temptations (representing the corruption of the Church by the world). Peter begins to suggest that they should adorn their coats with fringes, satins, and gold lace; and he first cleverly perverts the reading of the will of their father, and afterwards shuts the will up out of sight. He then claims to be called

Lord Peter, and to take rule over his brothers. This, of course, represents the pretensions of the Romish Church to rule other Churches, the shutting up of the Bible, and the introduction of the ceremonies and ritual of the Romish worship. Afterwards Martin and Jack resolve to separate themselves from Peter, and to restore their coats to the form in which they originally received them. But this is not so easy. Jack tears away at the ornaments on his until, instead of restoring his coat to its former simplicity, he reduces it to a mass of parti-coloured rags. Martin takes off what ornaments he can, leaving others that cannot be now removed without destroying the texture itself. In the end Martin is shown to be the one who approaches nearest to obedience to the will of his father. The book was written to defend the English Church; but there was much in it which offended religious men of all parties.

Swift was also engaged in writing political pamphlets. Whilst he had lived with Sir W. Temple he had taken the Whig side in politics; but stronger than his party spirit was Swift's concern for the Church, and, influenced by his desire to seek its interests, he now threw the power of his writings into the Tory party, probably because he thought that this party was staunchest in its allegiance to the Church, and would best promote its welfare.

There was at this time a large demand every year for prophetic almanacks. These pretended to predict from astrology the events of the year, the accidents and deaths likely to happen among sovereigns and other great men. Their influence on the minds of persons who believed in them was mischievous; and though the names of those who were to die during the year were not given, yet the predictions were attached by the readers to particular individuals, and thus certain persons often felt themselves to be the subjects of the melancholy prophecy, and this was

painful to themselves and their friends. It entered into Swift's mind to expose the folly of these predictions; so at the beginning of the year 1708 (which in the old style began March the 1st) there appeared another prophetic almanack, written by a new prophet, Isaac Bickerstaff, who declared he had discovered a better way of reading the stars, and that his were the only true prophecies. One of the most popular of the almanack writers was a man named Partridge; and in Isaac Bickerstaff's almanack the writer declares his superiority to this man by saying that on the 29th of March Partridge will die, though he may not have discovered it himself.

Partridge was excessively angry that any one should have predicted his death, though he did not hesitate to predict that of other people; and when the 29th came, and he was still alive, he wrote indignantly of "the knaves who had predicted his death." But Swift brought out a pamphlet, which pretended to be a true history of the death of Mr. Partridge, the almanack maker, on the 29th of March, as predicted. It is written in the form of a "letter to a person of honour," and describes a visit the writer pays to Mr. Partridge just before his death. Mr. Partridge is asked whether the prediction has preyed upon his mind and made him ill, to which he replies: "I am thoroughly persuaded, and I think I have very good reasons, that Mr. Bickerstaff spoke altogether by guess and knew no more what will happen this year than I did myself." This surprises the writer, who asks what reason Mr. Partridge has for being convinced of Mr. Bickerstaff's ignorance, and he answers, "I am a poor, ignorant fellow, bred to a mean trade, yet I have sense enough to know that all pretences of foretelling by astrology are deceits, for this manifest reason, because the wise and the learned who can only know whether there be any truth in this science, do all agree to laugh at and despise it, and none but the ignorant vulgar give it credit,

and that only upon the word of such silly wretches as I and my fellows, who can hardly write or read. We have a common form for all these things; as to foretelling the weather, we never meddle with that, but leave it to the printer, who takes it out of any old almanack as he thinks fit; the rest was my own invention to make my almanack sell, having a wife to maintain and no other way to get my bread, for mending shoes is a poor livelihood." Mr. Partridge had been a shoemaker before he set up as an astrologer and prophet.

The joke amused people, and taught the folly of putting faith in such silly deceptions; and Steele, who was just beginning his paper the *Tatler*, took up the jest, and under the name and character of Mr. Bickerstaff wrote several of his essays.

In 1713 Swift was made Dean of St. Patrick's, Dublin; and when Queen Anne died the next year and the Tories went out of power, he gave up his visits to London, and settled down in Dublin. Stella and Mrs. Dingley came also to Dublin, and took a house on the other side of the Liffey.

During Swift's residence in London he had become acquainted with a family named Vanhomrigh. They lodged next door to him, and Mrs. Vanhomrigh frequently asked him to the house. She was a widow, an Irishwoman, with two daughters. They were extravagant, and managed their affairs badly, and the daughters had had scarcely any education, and were ill-trained girls. Swift undertook to give them some lessons, and one of them, Esther Vanhomrigh, became his pupil. He thus saw a good deal of them, and took some interest in Esther's improvement. He was at that time a middle-aged man of forty-five, and she a girl of one or two-and-twenty; but she took it into her head that she should like to be his wife, and so far forgot herself as to intimate as much to him. If Swift had intended

to marry any one, he would probably have married Stella, but he could not tell Miss Vanhomrigh this, so he wrote a poem, in which he complimented her in many ways, but gently hinted to her that he could not make her his wife. Miss Vanhomrigh was so flattered by the compliments that she did not see what Swift intended in the poem. The poem was called "Cadenus and Vanessa"—a transposition of Decanus or Dean, and a combination of Van and Esther.

Soon after Swift left London Mrs. Vanhomrigh died; and the two daughters, having property in Ireland, came to live in a house belonging to them near Dublin. Swift did not see anything of them till about three years after they came to Ireland, and then Esther Vanhomrigh's sister died. Her mother, brothers, and sisters were all now dead (for the family seems to have been sickly), and Esther Vanhomrigh was left quite alone. Under these circumstances Swift renewed the old acquaintance with her; but Miss Vanhomrigh was jealous of Stella, and wrote an impertinent letter to her. Stella gave the letter to Swift, who rode off immediately to Marley Abbey, Miss Vanhomrigh's house, entered the room where she was, and sternly placing the letter on the table, rode away, and never saw her again. Three years after this Miss Vanhomrigh died, and Swift has been accused of having occasioned her death by his harshness. It does not, however, seem probable, though he, perhaps, flattered her too much in the earlier days of their acquaintance.

In 1724 Swift wrote the "Drapier's Letters." These were occasioned by a patent having been granted to a man named Wood for coining copper coin for Ireland. Swift thought it a plan by which Wood was to enrich himself at the expense of Ireland, and roused the Irish to oppose it. The letters were written anonymously, and signed M. Drapier; the stir they occasioned prevented in the end the granting of the patent.

Swift was also busy at this time in writing what is perhaps his best known work—"Gulliver's Travels." This book, like "Robinson Crusoe," professes to have been written by a shipwrecked sailor; but while De Foe's story has all the appearance of reality, and this is carefully preserved by the writer throughout, Swift's is a journey into Wonderland, and the adventures are a satire on existing things.

Lemuel Gulliver is cast ashore in a shipwreck on an island to the north-west of Van Dieman's Land. It appears to him to be uninhabited; and he stretches himself on the grass and falls asleep. When he awakes he finds himself fastened down by a number of threads, and he sees, to his astonishment, a little man not six inches high walking over his breast. Presently as many as forty of these little creatures begin to walk over him. These are the Lilliputians, who are the inhabitants of the Island of Lilliput, on which Gulliver has been wrecked. Gulliver lives for some time among these tiny beings; and in the laugh which their little doings and small rivalries call forth, we feel we are laughing at the petty aims and littlenesses of the time, and it was Swift's purpose to set these forth in this way.

Gulliver is taken to the Court of the Emperor of Lilliput, and is shown how the chief ministers, and persons holding high office gain Court favour. A fine piece of thread is stretched about two feet from the ground, and on this the little men, desirous to become great, dance their best; and he who jumps the highest without falling has given to him any vacant office. Flinenap, the Chief Lord of the Treasury, can cut a caper at least an inch higher than any other lord in the empire.

Gulliver found among these small people causes of strife, which while striking him as ridiculous in their pettiness, were not more absurd than some of the grounds of

quarrelling among men would appear to superior beings. There were two dangers to the commonwealth at Lilliput, he was told—a violent faction at home, and the probability of invasion from a powerful enemy abroad. The strife at home was caused by two parties, who contended violently whether high or low heels should be worn to their shoes. The high heels asserted that these were most agreeable to their ancient constitution; the king, however, preferred low heels, and made use of only those who wore low heels in the offices of Government. The party spirit ran so high, that the high and low heeled people would not eat, drink, nor talk with one another. Weakened by this division among themselves, the Lilliputians had a quarrel with a neighbouring State, called Blefuscu. The question at issue in this case was whether in eating an egg it should be broken at the larger end or the smaller. The Lilliputian Emperor had made an edict that eggs should be broken at the smaller end; but rather than conform to this usage, 11,000 persons had suffered death; and many hundred large volumes had been written on this controversy. Many persons had left the country in consequence of their Bigendian views, and found refuge at the Court of Blefuscu; and the Blefuscuans had taken up their cause, declared war against Lilliput, and were now preparing a large fleet to invade the country. This fleet Gulliver easily captures, as soon as it appears.

This is the account Gulliver gives of his way of living among these little people:—"Two hundred sempstresses were employed to make me shirts and linen for my bed and table, all of the strongest and coarsest they could get; which, however, they were forced to quilt together in serveal folds, for the thickest was some degrees finer than lawn. Their linen is usually three inches wide, and three feet make a piece. The sempstresses took my measure as I lay on the ground, with a rule of an inch long. Three

hundred tailors were employed in the same manner to make me clothes. When my clothes were finished, which was done in my house, for the largest house of theirs was not able to hold them, they looked like patchwork, only all of a colour. I had three hundred cooks to dress my victuals, in little convenient huts about my house, where they and their families lived, and prepared me two dishes each. I took up twenty waiters in my hand, and placed them on the table; a hundred more attended below on the ground, some with dishes of meat and some with barrels of wine slung on their shoulders, all which the waiters on the table drew up as I wanted, as we draw the bucket up a well in Europe. A dish of their meat was a good mouthful. I have had a sirloin of beef so large that I have been forced to make three bites of it, but this is rare. My servants were astonished to see me eat it bones and all, as in our country we do the leg of a lark. Their geese and turkeys I usually ate at a mouthful; of their smaller fowl I could take up twenty or thirty at the end of my knife."

Gulliver afterwards leaves Lilliput, and going to sea, is again caught in a storm and cast upon an unknown shore. The first thing that strikes him here is that the grass is twenty feet high, and passing on he comes into a field of barley which is at least forty feet high. The hedge at the end of the field is one hundred and twenty feet high, and each step of the stile at least six feet high. Presently he sees a man approaching him, who is as tall as the spire of the church; and a noise which Gulliver takes for thunder, but which is the giant speaking, calls together seven monsters like himself, with reaping-hooks like scythes in their hands. Gulliver tries to hide among the corn, and regrets he has ever left Lilliput, where he had passed for a great man. He is found, however, and is taken to the farmhouse, and given as a plaything to a little girl.

This little girl was about nine years old, and very clever in dressing her doll. The doll's cradle is given to Gulliver for a bed, and it was put into the drawer of a cabinet, and this became his bedroom. The little girl herself was about forty feet high, and considered small for her age. One day an old farmer came to the house, and Gulliver was put upon the table that he might see him. The old man put on his spectacles, which looked to Gulliver like the full moon shining through two windows, and this made him laugh heartily. The old farmer was angry, and he advised Gulliver's master to take him about as a show. This was done; and after a while Gulliver was brought to Court to be shown to the king. The king invited him to stay, and Glumdalditch, the farmer's child, stayed also to take care of him. Here he was exposed to many dangers from his smallness and weakness compared with the things around him. A mischievous dwarf shook apples, as large as a barrel, from the tree upon him; he was knocked down by hailstones as big as cannon-balls; a small white spaniel, twice the size of an ox, took him up in his mouth; he was nearly carried off by a kite; he fell into a mole hill; the birds in the garden would snatch his cake out of his hands, and he could not help it; and one day a monkey carried him off to the top of the roof of the house. The King of Brobdingnag, as this country was called, liked to hear Gulliver's accounts of the doings in England, and was as much amused at the littleness of the English in their ambitions and rivalries, as Gulliver had been at the wars and quarrels of the Lilliputians.

One day a bird carried off the box in which Gulliver lived at Brobdingnag, and dropped it into the sea, where he was picked up by a vessel and came home. He made other voyages, however, and on one of these met with a flying island, called Laputa. This island in the air was inhabited

by philosophers, who lived only for the sake of indulging their speculations, with no real love of truth, or desire to turn their discoveries to practical use. The king was always working mathematical problems; he required to be struck before he could see or listen to anything going on. At dinner there was a shoulder of mutton cut into an equilateral triangle, a piece of beef into a rhomboid, and a pudding into a cycloid. The servants cut the bread into cones, cylinders, parallelograms, and other mathematical figures.

There was an academy on the island, with about five hundred rooms in it, in each of which was a philosopher engaged in making some discovery. One was a dirty, ragged man, who for eight years had been trying to extract sunbeams out of cucumbers, though all the while the sun had been shining freely, and doing its work in the earth. Another was trying to calcine ice into gunpowder. A most ingenious architect had contrived a new method for building houses by beginning at the roof and working downwards to the foundation. Another man had formed a plan for ploughing the land by hogs. "In an acre of ground you bury, at six inches distance, and eight feet deep, a quantity of acorns, then you drive six hundred or more hogs into the field, and in a few days they will have rooted up the ground in searching for the acorns." The trouble and expense of this was very great, but it was thought it might be improved. There were besides ingenious people employed in softening marble for pillows and pin-cushions; in petrifying the hoofs of a horse to save shoeing him; in trying to prevent the growth of wool on the lambs so as to get sheep with no wool on them. In another part of the academy was a philosopher who had invented a machine for making books; and here also was a clever professor of mathematics who had devised a new plan of teaching geometry. The proposition and demonstration were written on a thin kind of wafer; this the

students were to swallow fasting, and to take nothing but bread and water for three days. Then the proposition and the proof mounted into the brain. But the plan had not yet answered, because the boys would not come to the class fasting, nor could they be depended on to live for three days on bread and water only.

While Swift was in London, where he had taken the MS. of "Gulliver's Travels," he received the news that Stella was dangerously ill. He returned at once to Ireland, and she became better for a while; but her health had been for some time failing. The next year Swift again visited London, and stayed with Pope at his villa at Twickenham, but again he was recalled to Ireland by Stella's dangerous illness. On January the 28th of the next year, 1728, she died. Swift's own health was getting worse, and when Stella died, all that had brightened his life went out of it. The disease of the brain was increasing, and Swift had between him and death the horrible prospect of insanity. But before he reached this stage he made his will, in which he left nearly all the savings of his life to found a hospital for idiots and lunatics, thus providing in his own misery for the sufferings of others similarly afflicted. In 1741 he had completely lost his reason, and on the 19th of October, 1745, he passed away, and the long misery of his life was over.

We must now see the more complete and finished development of the prose essay, of which De Foe and Swift both furnish some examples. De Foe had started the idea in his *Review* of writing short criticisms and satires on society. The world of that day was artificial and corrupt, and earnest men were beginning more and more to feel the oppression of the false standards and arbitrary rules established in Literature. Two of the writers of the time set themselves especially to the great work of bringing the new strength of higher principles and nobler aims into the corrupt and decaying social life. These were Steele

and Addison, united by early friendship, as well as by fellowship in work.

Steele was born in March, 1762, Addison on the 1st of May in the same year; there was only a difference of seven weeks between them in age. Richard Steele was the son of an Irish attorney; and before he was five years old had lost both father and mother. He was thus deprived of the early training which teaches self-control and obedience; but at the same time he learnt to be independent, and to esteem and make a friend of any one worthy of his confidence and love, more readily than a boy does who is brought up in one family connection. At twelve years old the little orphan boy was sent to the Charterhouse School, London, Lord Ormond having obtained a presentation for him.

The circumstances of Joseph Addison's early life were a great contrast to those of his friend. He was born at Milston, a village on the borders of Salisbury Plain. He was the son of a clergyman, and each of his grandfathers was a clergyman also. He was thus surrounded from his birth by all the influences of religious training and culture. Both his father and mother had been brought up in well-ordered homes, where religion and learning had the first place, and his own life and character show the effects of a similar childhood and youth. A few years after Addison's birth his father became Dean of Lichfield, and the family removed there. When Joseph Addison was thirteen he was sent to the Charterhouse School, where he met with Richard Steele, and the friendship began which was to be so full of important results to both. There was just that union of feeling and purpose between the boys which drew them closely together, while there was also that difference in character which made them never weary of one another's companionship—the likeness in essentials and the diversity in non-essentials which form the strongest assurance of a deep and lasting friendship. Addison was

reserved, and had lived under a good deal of restraint; and it was perhaps the thorough naturalness and openness of Steele which first drew the shyer nature of Addison to him. A boy with Addison's feeling, imagination, and sense of humour might never have found full sympathy, or the power to live all the life that was in him, in his own home, and these Steele's genial, frank, healthy nature would give to him. Both had thoughts, too, which rose above this world and laid hold of spiritual things; and Addison's home teaching of religion might often here be a help to the equally earnest, but less instructed, orphan boy. Addison was fond of books, and had been trained in early habits of study; Steele loved human beings, and had strong interest in life; and here again they no doubt helped one another. Addison might set Steele to work, and Steele teach Addison to understand and trust the world around him. Addison's father, the Dean of Lichfield, was pleased with the friendship of the two boys, and gave it his blessing; and Steele, who had no home, passed his holidays with his friend at the Deanery at Lichfield.

After two years at the Charterhouse, Addison went to Oxford. He entered first at Queen's, but was afterwards elected a demy of Magdalen. In 1689 Steele came to Oxford, to Christchurch. They were thus again companions in study, and still more, perhaps, in that growth of mind and feeling which taught them to understand the world of the past in literature and history, and gave them interest in national life, and in the lives of individual human beings. They would have dreams, too, of the future—of how they might do some work together for the love of God and their neighbours, and fight a good fight against the world, the flesh, and the devil.

They both began to write while they were at college. Addison had studied the rules of literature, and understood the art of criticism, and his approach to literature was

from the outside. His first work was some lines in the "Miscellany" professing to give an account of the English poets from Chaucer to Dryden, and attempting some shallow criticisms on their works. But Addison's own deeper sympathies made him feel at the same time that Milton was "above the critic's nicer laws." He saw clearly, and was one of the first to feel, that the greatness of Milton's mind, and the variety and width of his culture, were more than sufficient to guide him rightly in his work, and were likely to teach him better literary art than the French rules could impart.

Steele's first literary work was also done at college, where he wrote a comedy, and some lines on the death of Queen Mary, the wife of William III. In the first he dealt with the gladness, and in the second with the sorrow of human life. Steele thus approaches literature from the inner life of feeling and sympathy with the joys and sorrows of his fellowmen. And this love of humanity and intense interest in life are characteristic of all Steele's work, and form the motive principle underlying it.

This difference in relation to their work must have made the close friendship of Addison and Steele again mutually helpful to one another. Addison's taste for the artistic form of literature, and his quick perception of its outward grace, would help to cultivate his friend's care and skill in expression; while Steele's direct dealings with the realities of human life would draw out Addison's feelings in relation to it, and quicken his sympathies.

Steele showed his comedy to his friends at college, and probably for want of some attention to conventional rules they did not approve it. Always simple and unconscious, he took their judgment as a just conclusion that literature was not his work. He therefore determined to be a soldier. It was a time of danger to William III., and the Revolution, and there was a demand for trustworthy men in

the army. Steele had no means of procuring a commission, so he enlisted in the regiment of Lord Ormond, whose father had given him the presentation to the Charterhouse School. The colonel of the regiment was Lord Cutts. He soon found out that Steele was no common soldier; he therefore made him his secretary, and got for him an ensign's commission.

Steele found that the principles of the new world in which he now lived allowed of many things which his better knowledge and higher nature told him were wrong. They must be resisted as temptations; but it was no easy matter to set himself up as better than his comrades, and his genial nature and ready sympathy with all the enjoyment of human life made it specially hard for him. Often he found himself giving way, and he wanted to do something which would so completely commit him to the side of right that he could not, for very consistency's sake, yield to the lower life around him. He wrote, therefore, a book, which he called "The Christian Hero." It was dedicated to his colonel, Lord Cutts. In this book Steele shows that true heroism consists in self-control, and in the ordering of the conduct and life after the example of Christ and the laws laid down in the Sermon on the Mount; and he contrasts this with the common notion of heroism derived from the heathen world. Steele showed his right to be the author of such a book, for it needed some Christian heroism on his part to publish it in that age as written by an ensign in the Guards, and in doing it he nailed his colours to the mast boldly and bravely.

We must now follow Addison until the two friends come together again. While Steele had been learning more of human nature and life in the army, Addison had been gaining further culture by travelling. Both had started upon life by different roads in another respect. Steele had resolved to make his own way in the world, and to stand honestly

on his own merits, without interest or patronage. It would have been hardly possible, perhaps, for Addison, with his shy nature, to have fought the battle of life so independently. Everything was done at that time through patronage, or the help of those in power given to young men just beginning to ascend the difficult road; and Addison's father had benefited by the patronage of Sir Joseph Williamson, Secretary of State, and had probably brought up his son to look to this as a not dishonourable means for getting on in life. Addison on leaving college sought and gained the patronage of Lord Somers and of Charles Montagu, afterwards Earl of Halifax. The Government wanted young men of intellect and culture, good writers, and able to defend political measures, or attack the opposite party, and Addison seemed a likely young man for this purpose. A travelling allowance was granted him of £300 a year, and in 1699 he went to make the grand tour of Europe. On his travels Addison wrote his poem, "A Letter from Italy," addressed to Lord Halifax. He remained abroad till 1703, though his pension dropped at the death of William III. in 1702; the next year he returned to London.

Steele had written the year before a comedy which had had some success. It was called *The Funeral; or, Grief à la Mode.* This is not a light treatment of so sad and solemn a thing as death, for there is no death in it, only the supposed death of an old lord, who recovers from his lethargy, and, aided by a confidential servant, watches the behaviour of his relatives, and the preparations for his own funeral. When Addison returned to London, Steele was writing another comedy, *The Tender Husband.* The two friends talked over the comedy together, and Addison made suggestions, which Steele adopted, and gave him full credit for. Steele afterwards wrote of these days: "I remember, when I finished *The Tender Husband*, I told him there was nothing I so ardently wished as that we might, some time or

other, publish a work written by us both, which should bear the name of the 'Monument,' in memory of our friendship." But the time for that work, which is still an everlasting memorial of the two friends, had not yet come. Addison wrote verses in praise of Marlborough and in commemoration of the battle of Blenheim. This poem was called the "Campaign;" and in 1706 he was made Under-Secretary of State. He also wrote the verse for an opera, called *Rosamond*, which introduced Woodstock, and gave place for compliments to Marlborough. A change in the Government lost Addison his place in it, and he then became Secretary to Earl of Wharton, Lord Lieutenant of Ireland. Steele had now left the army, and had been appointed gazetteer. He had married, but lost his wife a few months afterwards. She left him, however, a small property in Barbadoes. In 1707 he married Miss Mary Scurlock, a lady whose carefulness and prudence were a help to him, and a check upon his generous disregard of his own interests. His name for his wife in his correspondence is generally "my dearest Prue." In 1709 Addison was still in Ireland with Lord Wharton, and Steele was living in London. De Foe at that time was bringing out his *Review*, with its "Supplement," dealing with the social and domestic life of the time in such a way as to carry good counsel into the homes of the people. Steele, with his keen interest in life and love of mankind, saw in De Foe's publication the very form of writing in which he might best express his earnest desire to improve the tone of domestic and social life by calling out those natural feelings through which alone society could be raised and purified. It was just at this time, also, that Swift had exposed the folly of prophetic almanacks by his jest at Partridge, under the name of Bickerstaff. The success of Swift's jest had made the name of Bickerstaff well known in London; people would be ready to read anything professing to come from the same person, so Steele

took up the name, and in the character of Mr. Bickerstaff began to write the *Tatler*. It was a penny paper, published three times a week, and the first number appeared on the 12th of April, 1709. It was to be written "for the use of the good people of England," and it appealed to them, and not merely to that circle of persons who regarded literature as something to be patronised and rewarded by their notice. On the return of Addison to London, Steele drew his friend into his work, and Addison contributed papers to the *Tatler*. The *Tatler* came to an end on the 2nd of January, 1711, owing to exception having been taken by the Government to certain remarks in some of the papers; but the success of an appeal to the good sense and natural feeling of the "good people of England" had been fully proved; and it was plain that the heart of the people was sound, notwithstanding the corruption of society in some circles, and the artificial views of literature still prevailing. The two friends felt justified in starting another publication of the same kind, but from which politics were to be excluded; and thus they began that work together which was to form a lasting monument of their friendship. Like the *Tatler*, the *Spectator* was to be "for the use of the good people of England," and to refresh and purify the current of daily life. It went at once to the deepest sources of a sound and healthful life, in keeping before its readers the relation of man to God, and in leading them back to the love of nature and of truth. It gave more earnest views of life by showing its true purpose to be fulfilled in duty, and how "the fashion of this world passeth away;" but while teaching the instability of earthly things, the *Spectator* constantly asserted the endurance beyond life of all its best blessings, its affections and friendships, and the enjoyment of all that is good and beautiful. It also showed how the cheerful and brighter side of life is really ever in harmony with duty, and not with pleasure sought after for its own sake.

In an age when great regard was paid to outside forms, and when these often misrepresented the truth, the *Spectator* led men to care more for the real heart of things, to scorn the false affectations and deceptions of society, and to love truth itself, as shown in simplicity of character and straightforward action. It did good service also, at a time when it was the fashion to sneer at religion and natural feeling, by encouraging the fearless expression of faith in God and of allegiance to Him, and the frank display of all pure, honest feeling. Besides its influence on domestic and social life, the *Spectator* wakened a wider-spread interest in literature, and in questions affecting all classes of men, and thus prepared the way for the literature of the later time, which deals with a much larger range of subjects and appeals to all classes of the people.

In their joint work, Steele did the most in restoring truth and natural feeling as the foundations of domestic and social life; and Addison in wakening a love of nature, and an interest in the literature of the past.

Though the *Spectator* made use of satire in exposing the follies of society, its purpose was not to gratify the bitter taste of those persons who, having used life for their own frivolous pleasure, find delight in laughing and sneering at it. Its teaching was earnest and positive, and its purifying influence arose from the charm it gave to simplicity and truth, even more than from its contempt of folly and wickedness.

It would be impossible to give a connected sketch of a work like the *Spectator*, which consisted of 635 different papers on a great variety of subjects. The plan of the work was this:—The Spectator himself was supposed to be a very shy gentleman, observant and discriminating, taking shrewd notice of all that went on around him in society, but incapable of talking about it. He belongs to a small club, one of the principal characters in which is Sir Roger de Coverley, a country gentleman of Worcestershire, a great-

grandson of the "inventor of the country-dance called after him." There are, besides, a barrister of the Inner Temple, a reader and student of life in all ages, which "makes him a very delicate observer of what occurs in the present world;" a London merchant, Sir Andrew Freeport, "a person of indefatigable industry, strong reason, and great experience," whose favourite maxim is "a penny saved is a penny got;" Captain Sentry, more of a faithful soldier than a courtier, and therefore unable to rise in his profession according to his merits; Will Honeycombe, an old beau, and an authority on all matters of gossip, scandal, and changes of fashion. Then there is a clergyman, a rare visitor at the club, "a very philosophick man, of general learning, great sanctity of life, and the most exact good breeding. He seldom introduces the subject he speaks upon; but he observes when he is among us an earnestness to have him fall on some divine topick, which he always treats with much authority, as one who has no interests in this world, as one who is hastening to the object of all his wishes, and conceives hope from his decays and infirmities." It will be easily perceived how complete a view of life in its many-sidedness is gained by representing it as seen through the eyes of just this group of men. The silent, travelled spectator, close observer of the little things which display the real undercurrent beneath the assumed form. The straightforward, simple, country gentleman, looking at life with trust and confidence in all, and from the point of unsuspecting truth and honour. The student of life in past ages, comparing the present with the past; and thus viewing life with a trained power of judging and criticising. The merchant, who sees everything in the light of trade and material profit. The frank soldier, too modest and honourable to press to the front through the pushing crowd eager for the prizes of life, and satisfied with having done his own duty. The old beau, who looks on life only from the side

of pleasure and fashion, and when other men would speak of what a great man or minister said on such an occasion, he will remember who danced with the Duke of Monmouth, what dresses the ladies wore, and how some celebrated beauty tapped him with her fan. The clergyman, whose eyes are raised to heaven, and who sees all earthly things in the light that shines from God.

Some of the most charming papers in the *Spectator* are those relating to Sir Roger de Coverley—his visit to town to see Prince Eugenio, as he calls him, and the way in which he lives for a while there, in the world but not of it; then the subsequent visit of the Spectator to Coverley Hall in the summer-time; the old house, and simple patriarchal life of the squire among his people, so kindly and true; and in the end the death of Sir Roger, caught by going to the sessions to see justice done to a poor widow, and related to the club in a touching letter from Sir Roger's old butler.

On every Saturday the paper dealt with some serious subjects, such as might be fitting reading for Sunday; some of these papers are written in the character of the clergyman who was a member of the club. In one of these was published Addison's well-known hymn, "When all thy mercies, O my God," and, as it first appeared in the *Spectator*, there was a verse in it having reference no doubt to Steele and their long friendship—

> "Thy bounteous hand with worldly bliss
> Has made my cup run o'er,
> And in a *kind and faithful friend*
> Has doubled all my store."

It was through the pages of the *Spectator* that Addison called attention to Milton. He had early shown an appreciation of Milton, which at that time was rare, for Milton belonged to an age far more earnest and heroic than the times Steele and Addison had fallen upon; and among their

efforts to renew the better life of society and literature in their day, were Addison's papers on "Paradise Lost," and on the old ballads.

Although the greater part of the *Spectator* was the work of Steele and Addison, there were other occasional contributors. Pope wrote three papers; the first was his poem "The Messiah," which is introduced as written by "a great genius who is not ashamed to employ his wit in the praise of his Maker." Other writers were Budgell, Tickell, Hughes. The original *Spectator*, joint work of Steele and Addison, was concluded in 1712. It was revived again by Addison in 1714, but only lasted a few months. Steele meantime had begun the *Guardian*. Politics had been excluded from the *Spectator*, but there were great interests at stake in the country, and Steele wished to take his part in the conflict. In the *Guardian* he pledged himself to impartiality, but not to silence or neutrality. He discussed freely the Treaty of Utrecht and the Hanoverian succession. Steele wrote at this time a pamphlet, the "Crisis," and the *Englishman*, another paper. Addison, at the accession of George I., wrote also in favour of the Hanoverian succession in the *Freeholder;* both the friends felt that those principles they had urged in the *Spectator* as the ground of a healthful, pure, national life could only be maintained in a free State.

In 1719 a slight difference in political opinion arose between them in regard to the Peerage Bill, which Steele opposed in a pamphlet called the "Plebeian," and to which Addison replied in the "Old Whig." This was Addison's last political writing. During the period between the dropping of the original *Spectator* and its revival, Addison had been engaged in bringing out a play he had written some time before. It was on the story of Cato, the patriot of Rome. The piece was received with great applause, which Steele delights to tell of in the *Guardian*.

In 1716 Addison married the Dowager Countess of

Warwick. He had for some time been a kind of tutor or guardian to her son, and he now took up his abode at Holland House. But the marriage does not seem to have been a very happy one, and Addison's health also was declining. He suffered much from attacks of asthma, and died June 17, 1719, in the calmness of a confident trust in God.

Steele survived his friend for ten years. He was now member of Parliament, had been knighted, was in the Commission of the Peace for Middlesex, and one of the deputy-lieutenants of the county. His opposition to the Peerage Bill brought on him the displeasure of the Government for a while, until Walpole's return to power; he was then restored to office, and brought out his last and most successful comedy, *The Conscious Lovers*. In 1726 he had an attack of palsy which weakened his constitution, and on September 1, 1729, he died at Carmarthen, where he was staying for his health, and where he had some property. It is said that he loved to be carried out of a summer's evening to watch the country folk upon the green, and would give an order for a new dress to the maiden who danced the best, thus showing the enduring freshness of a kindly human heart through life to death.

The influence of the *Spectator* in connection with a group of English novels must be mentioned before passing on to later writers. Its short papers, full of sympathy with human life, called into existence a large class of readers hitherto uninterested in literature. Country gentlemen, ladies, men carrying on a quiet trade in out-of-the-way towns, persons of little school education, and shut out from the world, delighted in the human interest of the *Spectator* papers, which brought into their secluded homes the fuller life of more changing events and stronger emotion. A good deal of the *Spectator* was written in the form of letters from persons detailing

events and asking counsel. Letter-writing became a kind of fashion. It was studied carefully, and made a means for display in composition and skill in expression. In 1740 Richardson produced a novel, called "Pamela," which consisted of a series of letters, professing to be written by a servant to her father and mother. The book was begun as a model of letter-writing for country people who wished to follow the fashion, and had not had education enough to write independently of some guide; but the story was kept up with interest, and the book became at once exceedingly popular. Every one was delighted in the history of the servant-maid, whom Richardson rewarded in the end by marrying her to her young master, a thorough scoundrel. Fielding saw that marriage to a bad man was certainly no reward for virtue, and, indeed, that virtue to be virtue must be independent of all reward. He therefore wrote a novel, which he called "Joseph Andrews," the hero of which he made the brother of Pamela Andrews; but this, too, was a story to be read for its own sake, and it established Fielding's success as a novelist. The success of Richardson's "Pamela" and of Fielding's "Joseph Andrews" brought another novelist into the field, Smollett, who in 1748 published "Roderick Random." These novels were soon followed by others; but Richardson, Fielding, and Smollett kept the lead as chief writers. In the same year as "Roderick Random" appeared, Richardson brought out "Clarissa Harlowe," which is generally considered his best novel. The next year Fielding published "Tom Jones," and again surpassed Richardson, having produced in this work a novel said to be the greatest in the English language. In 1751 appeared Smollett's "Peregrine Pickle" and Fielding's "Amelia." In "Amelia" Fielding represented his ideal of womanhood, and this was followed in 1753 by Richardson's "Sir Charles Grandison," which was

intended to be the picture of Richardson's idea of a perfect gentleman.

In a few years these novels had done much to interest the large body of the people in literature, and made them feel that they too had their part in it, both as readers and as the subjects of it. The English novels thus carried on the work begun by the short papers on characters, society, and life in the *Spectator*. The narrow reign of French classicism was passing away, and the sphere of literature was extending more and more into the real life of the people, and receiving new vigour from the contact with simple human sympathies and interests.

CHAPTER XVIII.

POPE (1688—1744).

EVERY poet must, by that large sympathy which is a part of his nature, reflect in himself the prevailing ideas and influences of his time; but while lesser poets receive and give expression to the characteristic thoughts and feelings of their age, the great poet goes further, and shows also how all these have meaning, and are working for the onward advance of the world. He sees the direction to which the currents of the time are tending, and can therefore point forward to the next step in human progress. Pope was thus chief poet of his time; he was much under its influences, and reflected its ideas; but we find him doing the great poet's work in sifting the true from the false, and in showing the meaning of the questions and conflicts with which the minds of men were exercised.

Alexander Pope was born in Lombard Street on the 21st of May, 1688. His father was a linendraper, and a Roman Catholic. At the accession of William and Mary severe laws were revived against Romanists, and very soon after his son's birth, Pope's father retired from business, and went to live at Binfield, on the borders of Windsor Forest. Alexander Pope's whole life was one long struggle of an active, keen intellect with physical weakness and pain. He was a small, sickly, deformed child, with an irritable, sensitive temperament; and we shall see how in later years his sense of his deformity, his constant dread of ridicule, and his extreme irritability, often led him into a bitterness of feeling

which was beyond his own control. But it must be remembered that while the proofs remain in his writings of occasions when he was overcome by the irritability of his natural temperament, the traces are lost of the hard struggles and well-fought victories through which alone he could have done his true work as poet, in spite of constant suffering and the painfulness of his deformity. Pope's first teacher was a Romanist priest; he was afterwards for a short time at a school at Twyford, and then he was sent to another school in London. While he was in London he saw, to his great delight, the old poet Dryden, who at that time was also a Romanist. Pope had already discovered his own skill in writing verse. He says of himself—

> "As yet a child, nor yet a fool to fame,
> I lisped in numbers, for the numbers came."

And on his return home to Binfield he made translations of Latin poets, and imitations of the older English poets. At sixteen he wrote his "Pastorals," though they were not published until five years later. He read a great deal during these younger years, and took special pleasure in Spenser's "Faerie Queene." The book was no doubt often his companion as he wandered through the glades of Windsor Forest, and he might fancy he could see Una and her lamb, or the Red Cross Knight riding down the green avenues. He began writing at this time his poem on Windsor Forest, which was finished later.

Pope's earliest published poems came out in "Tonson's Miscellany" when he was twenty, but his pastorals and other verses had been read in manuscript by many persons, and he was already becoming known as a rising poet. As such he had visited at the house of the Englefields, of Whiteknights Park, at Reading, and had been introduced to some of the literary men of the day. He there met another Roman Catholic family, the Blounts, of Maple Durham. One of the

ladies of this family, Martha Blount, became his attached friend through life, and the thought of her friendship and sympathy was a source of consolation to Pope in many a lonely hour of suffering and provocation.

At the time while the young poet was writing at Binfield, English literature was still under the rigid rules introduced from France. These had held sway now since the time of the Restoration, fifty years before; and under their influence there had grown up a race of "critics," who, with no sense of the spirit and ideas of literature, and therefore no power of appreciating any real literary work, set themselves to judge all literature by the standard of the French rules for its external form. Under critics such as these Shakespeare himself was pronounced to be "barbarous," Milton needed an apology, and Chaucer required to be completely re-dressed in the Latinised English of the day. Besides the race of critics, there had also arisen under the French influence a number of so-called poets, who, without poetic genius, learned the art of writing verse according to the rules, and wrote rhymes upon any subject, without regard to its poetic value. Pope, as a true poet, saw the danger to the very life of English literature from these critics and writers of verse. He attacked first the system of false criticism in a poem which he called an "Essay on Criticism." His object was to show that the standard of true criticism in literature is nature, and that its rules are "methodised nature," learnt from studying nature. Twenty years afterwards he strove to extinguish the petty writers of servile verse in the "Dunciad;" but though the two poems are separated by a number of years, they are so far united in subject that they may be best considered together. The "Essay on Criticism" was written in 1709. It is written in the rhymed couplets of ten syllabled lines, which belong to the French influence; but the spirit of the poem is the assertion of literary freedom against the French rules. A poet is taught by his genius

how to write; a critic by his gift of taste how to appreciate the poet's work—

> "Both must from Heaven derive their light,
> These born to judge, as well as those to write."

The appreciative faculty may be developed and guided by culture; but it must be true culture, gained by study of nature and life and of the best works of literature, not the surface knowledge of artificial rules. Even with the combined qualifications of natural faculty and sound culture, the critic must be modest in his judgments of the highest works of genius, because though he may discern some of their excellences, few persons are many-sided enough to be able to understand the greatest work completely in all its parts, seeing that—

> "So vast is art, so narrow human wit."

Art has its principles and laws, but these are to be "discovered in it," not "devised for it." Nature herself—

> "Life, force, and beauty, must to all impart,
> At once the source and end, and test of art."

Before any rules had been laid down for literary art, the ancient poets were true to law in their truth to nature, and there are in the works of the highest genius—

> "Nameless graces, which no methods teach."

In the second part of the "Essay on Criticism" Pope points out the causes of the false criticism of the time. Amongst these he puts first that narrow pride which shut the critic up in himself and his own ideas, and destroyed sympathy between himself and the author:—

> "A perfect judge will read each work of wit,
> With the same spirit that its author writ."

The determination to have but one form of style, and to fix the attention on this as of first moment, Pope condemns in another couplet :—

> " Their praise is still the *style is excellent*,
> The sense they humbly take upon content."

The patronage of literature by the upper classes, the evil passions excited by the rivalry and envy of struggling writers, their servility and flattery, their dishonest abuse, and the prejudice caused by the violent party spirit of the time, are all shown by Pope to be working the destruction of English literature.

The third part of the essay contains rules for good criticism ; these are truthfulness, readiness to acknowledge mistakes, modesty and courtesy, and the power sometimes to restrain all censure. A description follows of a false and a true critic—the false :—

> " A bookful blockhead ignorantly read,
> With loads of learned lumber in his head.
> With his own tongue still edifies his ears,
> And always listening to himself appears."

Then Pope asks for the true critic, almost unknown in those days :—

> " But where's the man, who counsel can bestow,
> Still pleased to teach, and yet not proud to know ;
> Unbiassed, or by favour or by spite
> Not dully prepossessed nor blindly right !
> Tho' learned, well bred ; and tho' well bred, sincere ;
> Modestly bold and humanely severe ;
> Who to a friend his faults can freely show
> And gladly praise the merit of a foe ;
> Blest with a taste exact, yet unconfined,
> A knowledge both of books and humankind,
> Generous converse, and exempt from pride,
> And loves to praise with reason on his side ?
> Such once were critics."

Nearly twenty years afterwards Pope wrote the "Dunciad," in which he passes from the critics to the swarm of petty writers; and in the later poem he strives to put down these pretenders to literary art. Under the French influence, when writing verse was a fashion, a number of persons with no poetic gift tried their skill in rhyming, and degraded literature by spending their time in making verse, instead of employing themselves in any honest, good work, by which they might gain an honourable livelihood. They were often in debt and in want, and were ready to write for money, false flattery, and false abuse. They were full of jealous rivalry of one another, and still more of any greater and more successful poet, and Pope had for this reason been frequently exposed to their attacks.

Pope's own life was a contrast to the course of writers such as these. He knew his own abilities, and he had had the good opinion of men who were competent judges as to his real poetic talent. He was quite unfit for most kinds of employment, and it was by his father's wish that he gave himself to literary work; and he worked hard, too, in spite of constant weakness and suffering.

Pope lived with his father and mother at Binfield for twenty-eight years. During this period he paid frequent visits to London, and made acquaintance with Swift, Addison, and Steele, and all the chief writers of the time. He contributed some poetic pieces to the *Spectator*, and he worked industriously at translations. He translated Homer's "Iliad" and the "Odyssey" into English verse; and in 1714 he completed and published the "Rape of the Lock." This was a bright, playful little mock epic, written for the good purpose of healing up a quarrel between two families, by showing the contrast between the not very serious occasion of offence, and the very serious and angry feelings brought to bear upon it. Lord Petre, a young nobleman, had cut off a lock of

Miss Arabella Fermor's hair, without her knowledge, while she was drinking a cup of coffee. She was naturally very indignant when she found it out; but the two families took the matter up, and made it the ground for a deadly feud. Pope writes in the high spirit and mighty language of the combatants, and in this mock heroic vein tells the little story of how Belinda (as he calls Miss Fermor) rises in the morning, attended by fairy sylphs, performs the business of her toilet midst—

> "Puffs, powders, patches, Bibles, billet-doux."

Then in the same strain he describes her joining the water party on the Thames:—

> "And now secure the painted vessel glides,
> The sunbeams trembling on the floating tides,
> While melting music steals upon the sky,
> And softened sounds along the waters die;
> Smooth flow the waves, the zephyrs gently play,
> Belinda smiled—and all the world was gay."

Thus they pass on to Hampton. But Belinda had—

> "Two locks, which graceful hung behind
> In equal curls, and well conspired to deck
> With shining ringlets the smooth ivory neck.
> The adventurous baron the bright locks admired,
> He saw, he wished, and to the prize aspired."

Arrived at Hampton Court, at that time a royal residence, they play a game at ombre and drink coffee. Just then Clarissa, one of the ladies of the party, "drew with tempting grace a two-edged weapon from her shining case" (takes a pair of scissors from the chatelaine at her side); she hands these mischievously to the admiring baron, and, in spite of the brave defence of the fairy sylphs attending on Belinda, he seizes the moment as she bends her head over her cup, and—

"The meeting points the sacred hair dissever
From the fair head for ever and for ever!"

The anger of the lady is next described:—

"Then flashed the living lightning from her eyes,
And screams of horror rend the affrighted skies;
Not louder shrieks to pitying Heaven are cast,
When husbands or when lap-dogs breathe their last,
Or when rich china vessels fallen from high,
In glittering dust and painted fragments lie."

The quarrel widens, as friends on each side step in, and the mock fight is carried on over the lock of hair, until at last it is found that the subject of contention has disappeared:—

"The lock obtained with guilt and kept with pain,
In every place is sought, but sought in vain."

It had escaped from the world out of the reach of both parties, and sailing to the sky—

"A sudden star it shot through liquid air,
And drew behind a radiant trail of hair.
Then cease, bright nymph! to mourn thy ravished hair,
Which adds new glories to the shining sphere!
Not all the tresses that fair head can boast
Shall draw such envy as the lock you lose.
For after all the murders of your eye,
When after millions slain yourself shall die,
When those fair suns shall set, as set they must,
And all those tresses shall be laid in dust:
This lock the muse shall consecrate to fame,
And midst the stars inscribe Belinda's name."

Pope made money by his writings, especially by his translations of Homer, and in 1715 his father sold the little property on which they lived at Binfield, and they moved to Chiswick. Here his father died, and soon after, Pope bought some land on the banks of the Thames at

Twickenham, and built a villa, amusing himself with laying out the gardens in the artificial style of the day. Part of the gardens was on the opposite side of the turnpike road, and Pope had a tunnel dug under the road, which he called a grotto. There were looking-glasses in this grotto, so arranged as to make it a kind of camera, in which the hills and river were reflected. To this villa Pope brought his mother, and she lived there with him till her death in 1733. He watched her most tenderly through her last years, and never left her long alone; he expressed his true feeling and no merely poetic sentiment when he wrote:—

> "Me let the tender office long engage
> To rock the cradle of reposing age,
> With lenient arts extend a mother's breath,
> Make languor smile and soothe the bed of death,
> Expose the thought, explain the asking eye,
> And keep awhile one parent from the sky."

Pope was now nearer to London, and his friends often visited him, driving by road, or taking a boat up the river; so that he had constant society at Twickenham.

It was during the later years of his life at Twickenham that Pope wrote the "Essay on Man." It is in this poem that Pope, the chief poet of that age, endeavours to make answer to some of the special questions and doubts of that time. Milton had set himself in his great poem to "justify the ways of God to man," because in his time faith was shaken by the prevalence of moral evil; now in an age of greater materialism, when the ease and comfort of life were held to be some of its chief aims, the cry of unbelief was raised against the rule of God, which could permit so much physical want and suffering. Looking on man as the centre of the universe, and his material happiness as the highest good, how, it was argued, can this world be under the rule of a God of love and wisdom? In order

to meet such objections, and to show that in regard to man's state in the present life, "whatever is, is right," Pope in his "Essay on Man" asserts, first, that man has no right to assume a supreme position in the universe, that he is probably only a link in a vast chain of beings, that He only, who has the means of knowing—

> "What varied beings people every star,
> May tell why Heaven has made us as we are."

From this point of view Pope shows the unreasonableness of demanding that man alone should "engross Heaven's high care," and still more that his material life should be made perfect here, to the injury and disorder of the "stupendous whole," but at the same time man in submitting to God's design, was "safe in the hand of His disposing power." Pope then admits, with Locke, that the sources of human knowledge are to be found in the material world, and are bounded by it; that even a Newton, who could "unfold all Nature's law," could not "explain his own beginning or his end;" and he shows the relation of man to the material world to consist in the store of things laid up in it for man's use, upon which man's intelligence and energy are brought to bear. In the right use of this provision lies the good or ill of material life. No state is in itself utterly destitute of the elements of physical good—"Some strange comfort every state attends." Pope then advances further, and shows the higher uses of the very weaknesses and imperfections of bodily life (and here he could speak from experience), because they are the sources of many of the noblest and tenderest feelings of the soul, for—

> "Wants, frailties, passions closer still ally
> The common interest, or endear the tie."

Through suffering and imperfection the whole race was bound together "in the chain of love;" it was human need

that called forth sympathy and self-sacrifice, the nobleness and joy of service; the very condition of human life being that "all must serve," because "all need service."

The objections against the existence and rule of God in the world had their source, Pope says, in the egotism of the time, which looks upon all things as existing only for each man's own gratification, "which thinks all made for one, not one for all," and which looking around Nature says only—"See all things for *my* use."

He concludes the argument by explaining that the search after material enjoyment, or after exemption from the imperfections of this present state, was not the end of life, or its reward; and he illustrates this by referring to Sydney, Falkland, and "Marseilles' good bishop," who won suffering and death as the crown of their steadfastness to love and duty. It is not in earthly things that the joys of life are found, nor is it in the giving or withdrawal of them that God rewards and punishes man—

> "But sometimes virtue starves whilst vice is fed.
> What then? Is the reward of virtue bread?
> That vice may merit, 'tis the price of toil;
> The knave deserves it when he tills the soil;
> The good man may be weak, be indolent,
> His claim is not to plenty, but content.
> What nothing earthly gives or can destroy,
> The soul's calm sunshine and the heartfelt joy
> Is virtue's prize. A better would you fix?
> Then give humility a coach and six,
> Justice a conqueror's sword, or Truth a gown,
> Or Public Spirit its great cure, a crown.
> Weak foolish man! Will Heaven reward us there
> With the same trash mad mortals wish for here?
> Rewards that either would to virtue bring
> No joy, or be destructive of the thing.
> To whom can riches give repute or trust,
> Content or pleasure, but the good and just?
> Judges and Senates have been bought for gold,
> Esteem and love were never to be sold.

O fool to think God hates the worthy mind,
The lover and the love of human kind,
Whose life is healthful, and whose conscience clear,
Because he lacks a thousand pound a year."

Thus "whatever is, is right," in that all things work together for good, because they are designed to nourish the higher life of the soul, and must not therefore be judged from their accordance with lower desires, and happiness is to be found in the life of love :—

" See the sole bliss Heaven could on all bestow,
Which who but feels, can taste ; but thinks, can know.
Yet poor with fortune, and with learning blind,
The bad must miss ; the good untaught will find.
Slave to no sect, who takes no private road,
But looks thro' Nature up to Nature's God ;
Pursues that chain, which links the immense design,
Joins heaven and earth and mortal and divine ;
Sees that no being any bliss can know,
But touches some above, and some below ;
Learns from this union of the rising whole,
The first, last, purpose of the human soul,
And knows where faith, law, morals, all began,
All end, in love of God, and love of man.
For him alone hope leads from goal to goal,
And opens still, and opens on his soul ;
Till lengthened on to faith, and unconfined,
It pours the bliss that fills up all the mind.
He sees why Nature plants in man alone
Hope of known bliss, and faith in bliss unknown.
Wise is her present, she connects in this
His greatest virtue with his greatest bliss ;
At once his own bright prospect to be blest,
And strongest motives to assist the rest ;
Self-love thus changed to social, to divine,
Gives thee to make thy neighbour's blessing thine.
Is this too little for the boundless heart ?
Extend it, let thy enemies have part :
Grasp the whole worlds of reason, life, and sense,
In one close system of benevolence ;

Happier as kinder, in whate'er degree,
And height of bliss but height of Charity."

The objections which Pope met rested on lower grounds than those which disturbed men's minds in Milton's days, and Pope does not rise like Milton to "the height of the great argument." Milton showed the victory of God's love over moral evil; Pope showed the victory of human love over physical evil; but both in their way strove to—

"Assert eternal Providence,
And justify the ways of God to men."

The later years of Pope's life were much disturbed by the attacks of the critics and small poets whom he had offended, and to these he replied by bitter, and sometimes unjust, satires. This war of words and angry feelings seems to us now a miserable abuse of literary skill and art; but in those days, when every man wore a sword, and thought it his duty to fight and slash his friend if he offended him, it appears to have been considered also a point of so-called honour for every writer to return reviling for reviling.

The "long disease" of Pope's life made it at last impossible for him to continue to write any longer. He died on the 30th of May, 1744.

CHAPTER XIX.

OLIVER GOLDSMITH (1728—1774).

We have seen how the energy of the life pent up in the minds and hearts of men was beginning to rise against the outside bondage which kept it down. The intellectual life of the mind could no longer be suppressed under political or social laws, nor the feelings of the heart be frozen by the coldness of selfish, worldly customs and aims. When anything has been forced out of its own true direction, we know how it will spring too far on the opposite side directly the restraint is broken through; and so it was now with the new life of thought and feeling. Having burst through the false bondage, the true rule of faith and duty were for a while cast off also; and the fresh, strong vigour showed itself at first rather in the distortion of reaction than in the completeness of growth.

In England thought had always been more or less free, but in France it had been long crushed under the most despotic Government, joined with the tyranny of a corrupt Church which misrepresented the religion of Christ. It was here, therefore, that the reaction was the most powerful. The writer who gave clearest and strongest expression to the new life of thought bursting through the dead forms was Voltaire. In France, too, the reaction against the selfishness and luxury of the age was also felt the most strongly, because it was here that self-indulgence and regardlessness of human suffering prevailed the most; and the

writer who gave the most powerful expression to the rising life of the feelings was Rousseau. Both writers expressed the necessary exaggerations of reaction; and while Voltaire claimed freedom for the intellect, independent of faith, Rousseau claimed free action for every impulse of feeling, independent of duty.

In Germany, meantime, there was a revolt going on against the French influence in literature. Bödmer first, and later Lessing, showed that there could be no vigorous growth of literature among any people which did not spring from the literature of its own life; and they asserted that Shakespeare in the drama, and Milton in poetry, were more true followers of the classics than the French, because, while the French imitated classic forms, these English writers had worked according to classic principles; for the Greeks made the inner truth the essential part of literature, and the forms grew around it, according to the genius of their nation and language. The casting-off in Germany of the French influence was the beginning of a true, vigorous, national literature, of which Goethe and Schiller were two of the greatest writers.

We must now see the influence of these writers on our English literature. Although Voltaire had no special follower of any great distinction in English literature, his influence in casting off false restraints upon thought led to a more courageous search for truth, and gave freedom and energy to the expression of it even if it were contrary to the prejudices and self-interest of the world. Rousseau's influence was more directly seen in some of the English writers of the time, who followed him in looking upon everything from the side of feeling. Of these writers, one of the principal was Laurence Sterne. He wrote a novel called "Tristram Shandy," and an account of his travels in France, which he called "The Sentimental Journey." Sterne reflected Rousseau's exaggerated expression of feeling, and,

like him, lost sight of duty as the true guide of life. But the new life of feeling did not become in England a mere expression of false sentiment. A hearty, honest sympathy with the sorrows and sufferings of human life broke up the dull, selfish indifference which had so much separated man from man and class from class; and the true English sense of duty led to efforts being made to find out the causes of misery, and to make these known, with the view of getting them remedied. The writer who best represents this rise of kindly sympathy and genuine love of his fellow-men is Oliver Goldsmith. We may also take him as a type of the time in illustrating the rising reaction against the French influence, and the return to simple truthfulness, to Nature, and to unartificial life.

Oliver Goldsmith was the son of an Irish clergyman, whose income when Oliver, his fifth child, was born, was little more than "forty pounds a year." At the time of Oliver's birth, in 1728, his father held the small living of Pallas, or Pallasmore, a very out-of-the-way Irish village; but two years afterwards he succeeded to the living of Kilkenny West, with an increased income of nearly two hundred a year. In this Irish home little Oliver grew up in the midst of six or seven brothers and sisters. Here he began that fight with poverty, which was a life-long struggle; here he gained that perfect simplicity of character, which in all his after intercourse with the world he never lost; and here he learned that kindly sympathy and love for others, and that self-forgetful generosity, which nothing could ever chill. Of his father he afterwards wrote:—"He loved all the world, and he fancied all the world loved him. We were told that universal benevolence was what first cemented society; we were taught to consider all the wants of mankind as our own, to regard the human face divine with affection and esteem; he rendered us incapable of withstanding the slightest impulse made by distress; in a word, we were

perfectly instructed in the art of giving away thousands before we were taught the more necessary qualifications of getting a farthing." When Oliver was six years old he was sent to the village school. The master was an old Irish soldier, who had been in the Duke of Marlborough's army. He was most likely made schoolmaster because he was fit for nothing else, and the chief knowledge he seems to have given to his scholars was contained in the stories he told them of his adventures in the big world beyond the little Irish village of Pallasmore; and in the little Oliver the wish was thus roused to run about, and see this wonderful world for himself. One sad thing happened to him at this school, however, and that was that he took a bad kind of small-pox. He had always been a plain child, but this terrible disease left him so disfigured that cruel-hearted people often made fun of the poor little boy; and thus there arose within him a fear that his appearance was displeasing to others, which made him feel all his life through a certain shyness, though there was never a bitter thought in his simple, kindly nature. After leaving this school he went to two others, and at seventeen he entered Trinity College, Dublin, as a sizar. In return for his board and college tuition he had to do some of the servants' work in the college. Many a man had risen in this way, in spite of poverty, to the full recognition and employment of his powers in high offices in the Church and in the State; but Goldsmith was not a student: he loved Nature and life more than books; he was overflowing with fun and good-humour, and got into scrapes, which terribly displeased his tutor.

After he had been at Dublin two years, his father died; and there was very little left for the family, and of that Oliver Goldsmith got none. His uncle sent him money sometimes, and he earned a little himself by writing ballads and selling them to a printer. At times he had to pawn his books for a few shillings; but through all he was merry and

light-hearted, having, as he says, "been blessed with a knack of hoping." He managed at length to get his B.A. degree, being last on the list; and then he went home, living sometimes at his mother's, sometimes with his brother Henry, and sometimes at his sister's. No one seemed to know exactly what was to be done with him. He could sing songs, tell stories, amuse a whole company, was clever in fishing and otter hunting, but by nothing that he did could he get a living. His family wished him to enter the Church, but he shocked the bishop by appearing before him to be examined in a bright scarlet hunting-suit. Then a tutorship was obtained for him in a family, where he stayed nearly a year, but getting tired of teaching, he suddenly left to go to America. Six weeks after, he came back to his mother's house penniless and in rags. He had paid his passage, sent his things on board, and then let the captain sail without him; and had begged his way back to his home. His uncle next suggested that Oliver should go to London and study law; so he was again sent off, and got as far as Dublin, but there he lost his money, and soon came home again. At last it was decided to send him to Edinburgh to study medicine; and this time the family managed to get him safely off, and from that day they never saw him again. There he stayed for about eighteen months; at the end of that time he wrote to his uncle that he had learned all the Scotch doctors could teach him, and he wanted £20 to go to Paris and study there.

The £20 seems to have been sent to him, and he set off for Paris; but as he never managed to reach the place he was going to, so now he stopped at Leyden. Here, he says, "physic is by no means so well taught as in Edinburgh, and the professors are so very lazy." After staying here ten months, during which time we may suppose the £20 to have been spent, he conceived the idea of making a tour of the Continent on foot. He set off, travelled

through Flanders, then walked into France, and this time he did get to Paris, where he attended chemical lectures and saw Voltaire. Next he found his way into Switzerland, and crossing the Alps, went into Italy. How he lived during this time is a mystery; he made his way partly by singing and playing the flute in farmhouses and cottages, and at village festivals; and he made many a friend among the peasantry, whom he easily won by his own simple, genial nature, and no doubt a noonday meal and a night's lodging were often freely given to him. Meantime, though he did not know it, he was really educating himself far more for his future work in life than he would have done had he remained to study medicine in Edinburgh, or law in London. He was gaining just that wide, genuine sympathy with human nature, that hearty love of mankind, and that larger experience of different forms of life, which had all been excluded from English literature under the French influence, and which Goldsmith was to help so much to restore to it. Unlike most of the writers of the time, who had lived their lives within a narrow circle, Goldsmith had now seen a rich variety of life and character. He could draw from this true pictures of men and women as they really existed, and give fresh and vivid sketches of perfectly simple natural life, free from the cramping and distorting of artificial forms.

After two years' absence, Goldsmith landed at Dover, and then walked to London, making his way as he had been accustomed to do in his travels in Europe. Here he had a hard life of it for some time. He got employment as an usher in a school; then he went into a druggist's shop, and used his knowledge of medicine in doctoring the poor; at last he got a better appointment as usher in a higher school at Peckham, kept by a Dr. Milner. He was a friend of Griffiths, the publisher, and Goldsmith undertook to write some articles for the *Monthly Review*, a periodical just started by Griffiths. He was to live at the publisher's and give

his time entirely to this work ; but at the end of five months he had done but little, and the engagement was closed. It had started Goldsmith, however, at literary work, which was to be the future work of his life. He now lived in lodgings, being often almost starved, while he wrote for magazines and did translations for publishers. At length, after about three years of constant want and struggle, Goldsmith published a little work which expressed more of his real mind and literary power, "An Inquiry into the Present State of Polite Learning in Europe." It was not a book collected from other writers, but was the result of his own observations in the different countries through which he had travelled, and it attracted attention as the original composition of an original thinker.

Soon after, Goldsmith began writing the "Chinese Letters," which brought him still more into notice, and which, while giving him opportunity for expressing the view which a simple, straightforward mind would take of the artificial life of the day, fell in with the general taste of the time for criticisms on society and manners. He supposes that a Chinaman, who had travelled in many countries, comes to London, and writes letters to his friends, describing all he sees and does Everything is looked upon from a Chinese point of view ; English customs and manners are criticised in the impressions they make upon a simple, natural mind living outside the artificial social life of the day. The narrow view which one nation often takes of another, the hasty judgments and misunderstandings which travellers often fall into, are also shown in such passages as that in which the Chinaman, a day or two after his arrival in London, writes to his friend of the vanity and ostentation of the English, who hang their pictures outside their houses ; and of the low state of art in England. "Could you believe it ? I have seen five *black* lions and three *blue* boars ; and yet you know that animals of these colours are

nowhere to be found, except in the wild imaginations of Europe."

These papers were afterwards published in a volume, and called "The Citizen of the World." We may trace throughout the reaction of simplicity and a more liberal judgment of men and things, which Goldsmith well represented, and which was beginning to rise against the bondage of false and cramped forms of thought and life.

Goldsmith may now be regarded as fairly started in his literary work; friends gathered round him, Johnson, Garrick, Sir Joshua Reynolds, Burke, and the most remarkable men of the time. They recognised his genius, loved his kindliness and humour, and often found amusement in his childlike simplicity. Though he was now living in better lodgings in Green Arbour Court, he was through life often in difficulties; for he never lost the easy light-heartedness which, while he was living in the present, made him forget to look forward to the future. As soon as he got a little money for his work, he would spend it in some way, often by helping any one in distress, for his heart was always open to the faintest appeal from any human being in trouble; sometimes the money all went in buying a fine embroidered coat, or in a merry dinner with his friends. Thus at the close of his life cares and difficulties pressed around him, and he died of a kind of nervous fever, brought on to some extent by worry and distress of mind. He was buried at the Temple Church on the 9th of April, 1774.

We must now speak of Goldsmith's greatest works. These were a story, two plays, and two poems. The story was called "The Vicar of Wakefield;" the two plays were *The Good-natured Man*, and *She Stoops to Conquer;* and his two chief poems "The Traveller" and "The Deserted Village."

"The Vicar of Wakefield" was a story of simple, natural life, and in the working out of it Goldsmith strives to show

the true poetry and beauty that lie in homely characters and simple scenes; that it is not the outside show of life which is its dignity and grandeur, but the inner truth and purity. It was an attempt to set before the world a more just estimate of things, and to win admiration for what was really noble and heroic—the inward sincerity and guilelessness, the steadfastness to duty, unselfish constancy of love, the sublime strength of faith and patience in the deep waters and dark storms of trial and sorrow; and Goldsmith shows still more the pure beauty of all these in contrast with the falseness and glitter, the low art and inconstancy of the vulgar, worldly life of the time. It is impossible to read "The Vicar of Wakefield" without feeling "it is only noble to be good."

The story is also a true picture of English country life; not such artificial descriptions of rural scenes as were introduced into the Pastorals of the time by people who never took a country walk, had never tossed the hay in the hay-fields, nor gossiped with the villagers upon the green. And the story is told too with such simple feeling and charming humour, that every one reads it with delight for its own sake. In a little preface, Goldsmith says, "The hero of this piece unites in himself the three greatest characters upon earth—he is a Priest, a Husbandman, and the Father of a family, He is drawn as ready to teach and ready to obey, as simple in affluence and majestic in adversity." This is the Vicar of Wakefield, Dr. Primrose, and it is he who tells his own story. He begins with a description of his wife and family. His wife he had chosen, he says, "as she did her wedding-gown, not for a fine glossy surface, but such qualities *as would wear well.*" They had six children, George, the eldest son, called after his king; then two daughters, Olivia and Sophia, names chosen by Mrs. Primrose, who had been reading novels, and objected to by the straightforward Vicar, because his daughters were not heroines of romance, but simple

country girls. The next son he named himself, Moses; then came two little boys, Dick and Bill. They were all equally "generous, credulous, simple, and inoffensive."

It was a strong opinion of the Vicar's, and was a part also of his simple, constant, loving character, that a clergyman especially should not marry again after his wife's death. He had written two or three tracts upon the subject, and he agreed in this opinion with Dr. Whiston, a clergyman of Queen Anne's time, who had had inscribed upon his wife's tomb that she was "the *only* wife of William Whiston;" so Dr. Primrose, without waiting for his wife's death, had written a similar epitaph, in which he said she was the *only* wife of Charles Primrose, and went on to extol "her prudence, economy, and obedience till death." Then he had it copied out fair, framed in an elegant frame, and hung over the chimney-piece, where it reminded his wife constantly of what he expected of her, of her husband's fidelity to her, and of her own end.

The family grew up, and the eldest son was engaged to be married to a Miss Arabella Wilmot, the daughter of a neighbouring clergyman, and a lady of some fortune. Everything went on happily, and the Vicar describes the pleasant country life led by him and his family:—"We were generally awakened in the morning by music, and on fine days rode a-hunting. The hours between breakfast and dinner the ladies devoted to dress and study. At dinner my wife took the lead, for, as she always insisted upon carving everything herself, it being her mother's way, she gave us upon these occasions the history of every dish. When we had dined, to prevent the ladies leaving us, I generally ordered the table to be removed; and sometimes, with the music-master's assistance, the girls would give us a very agreeable concert. Walking out, drinking tea, country dances, and forfeits, shortened the rest of the day without the assistance of cards, as I hated all manner of gambling

except backgammon, at which my old friend and I sometimes took a twopenny hit."

Meanwhile preparations were being made for the wedding, when it occurred to the Vicar to show Mr. Wilmot a new tract he was writing against second marriages, and which he "looked upon as a masterpiece, both for argument and style." To his surprise, he found that Mr. Wilmot was violently opposed to this opinion, and was indeed courting a fourth wife. Mr. Wilmot declared Dr. Primrose was heterodox, and a hot controversy followed between them. One day a friend called on Dr. Primrose and advised him to give up the dispute, and get his son married to Miss Wilmot as soon as possible, for the good Vicar's fortune was entirely lost through the bankruptcy of a merchant. "Well," replied the Vicar, "if what you tell me be true, and if I am to be a beggar, it shall never make me a rascal, or induce me to disavow my principles." He therefore made known immediately the loss of his fortune, and refused to retract a single argument in the controversy with Mr. Wilmot. The end of it was that his son's engagement was broken off.

Now begins the long series of misfortunes and sorrows which are to try the faith and patience of the Vicar and his family, and out of which they come in the end victorious and strengthened, with clearer insight into the true value of things.

The profits of the Vicar's living had only been about thirty-five pounds a year, and he had given this to the widows and orphans of clergy in the diocese; but now that his fortune was all gone, he had to seek some means of keeping his family. He therefore determines on taking a small cure in a village about seventy miles distant, to which was attached a little farm, which might by diligent cultivation be made sufficient. The farm belonged to a squire named Thornhill. George can no longer be kept at col-

lege, and he goes to London to seek his fortune. Then, amidst the distress of the villagers and the sorrow of the Vicar's family, they all set forth on horseback to journey to their new home. They ride thirty miles, and then put up at an inn for the night. Here they meet a gentleman who is unable to pay his reckoning; and immediately the Vicar, in his ready generosity and trust, places his purse at his disposal. The stranger gives his name as Mr. Burchell, and next day accompanies them on a part of their journey. In crossing a flooded stream Sophia Primrose is thrown from her horse, and is saved from drowning by Mr. Burchell's prompt assistance.

Their arrival at their new home, and their life there, are thus described by the Vicar:—

"The place of our retreat was in a little neighbourhood, consisting of farmers who tilled their own grounds, and were equal strangers to opulence and poverty. As they had almost all the conveniences of life within themselves, they seldom visited towns or cities in search of superfluity. Remote from the polite, they still retained the primeval simplicity of manners; and frugal by habit, they scarce knew that temperance was a virtue. They wrought with cheerfulness on days of labour, but observed festivals as intervals of idleness and pleasure. They kept up the Christmas carol, sent true-love knots on Valentine's morning, ate pancakes on Shrovetide, showed their wit on the first of April, and cracked nuts on Michaelmas Eve.

"Being apprised of our approach, the whole neighbourhood came out to meet their minister, dressed in their finest clothes, and preceded by a pipe and tabor.

"Our little habitation was situated at the foot of a sloping hill, sheltered with a beautiful wood behind, and a prattling river before; on one side a meadow, on the other a green. My farm consisted of about twenty acres of excellent land. Nothing could exceed the neatness of my little enclosures, the elms and hedge-rows appearing with inexpressible beauty. My house consisted of but one storey, and was covered with thatch, which gave it an air of great snugness; the walls on the inside were nicely whitewashed, and my daughters undertook to adorn them with pictures of their own designing. Though the same room served us for parlour and kitchen, that only made it the warmer. Besides it was kept with the utmost neatness, the dishes, plates, and

coppers being well scoured, and all disposed in bright rows on the shelves, the eye was agreeably relieved, and did not want richer furniture. There were only three other apartments—one for my wife and me, another for our two daughters, and the third, with two beds, for our other children.

"The little republic to which I gave laws was regulated in the following manner. By sunrise we all assembled in our common apartment. After we had saluted each other with proper ceremony—for I always thought fit to keep up some mechanical forms of good breeding, without which freedom ever destroys friendship—we all bent in gratitude to that Being who gave us another day. This duty being performed, my son and I went to pursue our usual industry abroad, while my wife and daughters employed themselves in providing breakfast. I allowed half an hour for this meal, and an hour for dinner; which time was taken up in innocent mirth between my wife and daughters, and in philosophical argument between my son Moses and me. As we rose with the sun, so we never resumed our labours after it was gone down, but returned home to the expecting family, where smiling looks, a neat hearth, and pleasant fire were prepared for our reception. Nor were we without guests. Sometimes Farmer Flamborough, our nearest neighbour, and often the blind piper, would pay us a visit and taste our gooseberry wine, for the making of which we had lost neither the receipt nor the reputation. These harmless people had several ways of being good company; while one played, the other would sing some soothing ballad, 'Johnny Armstrong's Last Good Night,' or 'The Cruelty of Barbara Allen.' The night was concluded in the manner we began the morning, my youngest boys being appointed to read the lessons for the day; and he that read loudest, distinctest, and best was to have a half-penny on Sunday to put into the poor's box.

"At a small distance from the house my predecessor had made a seat, overshadowed by a hedge of hawthorn and honeysuckle. Here, when the weather was fine and our labour soon finished, we usually sat together to enjoy an extensive landscape in the calm of the evening. Here too we drank tea, which now was become an occasional banquet, and as we had it but seldom, it diffused a new joy, the preparations for it being made with no small share of bustle and ceremony. On these occasions our two little ones always read to us, and they were served after we had done. Sometimes, to give a variety to our amusements, the girls sang to the guitar, and while they thus formed a little concert, my wife and I would stroll down the sloping field, that was embellished with bluebells and centaury, talk of our children with rapture, and enjoy the breeze that wafted both health and harmony."

It was on one of these pleasant evenings that an event occurred which was the beginning of a series of circumstances bringing change and sorrow into the simple happy life of the Vicar and his family. They were sitting under the bower of hawthorn and honeysuckle, when a stag and hounds suddenly bounded across, followed by the hunters. Amongst these was Mr. Thornhill, the neighbouring Squire, and landlord of the Vicar's little farm. This was their first introduction to him, and he was invited to join their party and drink a glass of Mrs. Primrose's celebrated gooseberry wine. From this time the Squire was a frequent visitor, and though the Vicar misliked him from the first, his wife and two daughters were enchanted by his manners and fine talk. The influence of the false, worldly life of the time, and its low standard, is soon seen upon Mrs. Primrose and the two girls. They are no longer happy in their natural, simple life; they consult a fortune-teller, who promises Olivia and Sophia a squire and a lord for their husbands; they fear to run out in the sunshine lest they should spoil their complexions, and they concoct a wash for their faces which the Vicar slily contrives, as by accident, to overturn from the hob into the fire. They are not to rise early for fear of dimming their eyes, nor to work after dinner lest they should redden their noses, and they are to sit idly with their hands before them, in order to keep them white. Instead of finishing George's shirts, they are planning and altering their dresses; and the neighbouring farmer's daughters are cast off as friends, while "the whole conversation ran upon high life, company, pictures, taste, Shakespeare, and the musical glasses." On Sunday Mrs. Primrose protests that it is highly ungenteel to walk to church, and she proposes that the family shall ride there on the two plough-horses. The Vicar suggests that the walk of two miles across the fields "would be twenty times more genteel than such paltry conveyance, as Blackberry was well aged, and the colt wanted a tail, that

they had never been broke to the rein, and had a hundred vicious tricks, and that there was but one saddle and pillion in the whole house." This did not convince the ladies; and the Vicar sets off to walk to church across the fields, while his family are to ride five miles round the road. In vain he waits in the reading desk for their arrival; he is at last obliged to begin the service, and at the end of it his family have not arrived. Directly it is over he sets off to look for them on the road, and presently sees the procession marching slowly along. Moses, Mrs. Primrose, and the two little boys "exalted on one horse, and the two girls on the other." The horses had refused at first to move till Mr. Burchell had come up and beaten them forward with his cudgel; then the straps of Mrs. Primrose's pillion had broken down, and they had to be mended; lastly, the other horse stood still in the road, and could not be moved. The finery which had been prepared for display at church was therefore wasted, and the family returned in much mortification.

About this time it was found that their neighbours, the Flamboroughs, were having their portraits painted by a travelling painter; and notwithstanding all the good Vicar could say, his wife and daughters were determined to have theirs done also. There were seven of the Flamboroughs, and they had all been painted in one picture with seven oranges; the Primroses were determined to have it done in better style than that, and with more variety. Mrs. Primrose would be represented as Venus, and the two little boys as attendant Cupids; and the painter was desired not to spare the diamonds in her hair and stomacher. Olivia was drawn as an Amazon sitting on a bank of flowers; Sophia as a Shepherdess, with as many sheep as the painter could put in for nothing. The Vicar, in his gown and bands, was taken as presenting Venus (his wife) with his pamphlets on the Whistonian controversy; Moses appeared in a fine hat and feathers; and when the young Squire found out what

was going on, he requested to be taken as Alexander the Great at Olivia's feet. Another mortification awaited the Primrose family; when the picture was done, it was found too large to be taken into the house, and had to be left leaning against the kitchen wall, a jest to all the neighbours.

The difficulty of getting to church in a genteel manner suggested to Mrs. Primrose the desirability of selling the tailless colt, and buying a horse that would carry single or double. On the morning of the fair, therefore, Moses sets out on the colt, dressed in "a thunder and lightning coat, which, though grown too short, was much too good to be thrown away. His waistcoat was of gosling green, and his sisters had tied his hair with a broad black ribbon, and had cocked up his hat with pins." It was late in the evening before Moses returned, and then he appeared, walking slowly, and "carrying a box like a pedlar."

"'Welcome, welcome, Moses!' cries the Vicar. 'Well, my boy, what have you brought us from the fair?' 'I have brought you myself,' cried Moses, with a sly look, and resting the box on the dresser. 'Ay, Moses,' said my wife, 'but where is the horse?' 'I have sold him,' cried Moses, 'for three pounds five shillings and twopence.' 'Well done, my good boy,' returned she; 'I knew you would touch them off. Three pounds five shillings and twopence is no bad day's work. Come, let us have it then.' 'I have brought back no money,' cried Moses again; 'I have laid it all out in a bargain, and here it is;' pulling out a bundle, 'here they are, a gross of green spectacles with silver rims and shagreen cases.' 'A gross of green spectacles?' repeated my wife. 'And you have parted with the colt and brought us nothing but a gross of green spectacles!' 'Dear mother,' cried the boy, 'why won't you listen to reason? I had them a dead bargain, or I should not have brought them. The silver rims alone will sell for double the money.' 'A

fig for the silver rims,' cried my wife in a passion; 'I daresay they won't sell for above half the money at the rate of broken silver.' 'You need be under no uneasiness,' cried I, 'about selling the rims, for they are not worth sixpence; for I perceive they are only copper varnished over, no more silver than your saucepan.'"

Then Moses tells how he had been persuaded, after selling the colt, to give the money in exchange for the gross of green spectacles. "Our family had now made several attempts to be fine," says the good Vicar, "but some unforeseen disaster demolished each as soon as projected. 'You see, my children, how little is to be got by attempts to impose upon the world in coping with our betters. Such as are poor, and will associate with none but the rich, are hated by those they avoid, and despised by those they follow.'"

But the exhortations of the Vicar had little effect on the family. The fine gentleman, the Squire, continued his visits, and introduced two pretended ladies, who called themselves Lady Blarney and Miss Carolina Wilhelmina Amelia Skeggs. They talked grandly of all their fine acquaintance in town, and had persuaded Olivia and Sophia to take situations as companions to them, and come up to London. Suddenly, however, they disappear, and the Squire informs the Primroses that some one had maligned the girls to them. Mr. Burchell is suspected of this, and a quarrel follows between him and the Primrose family. Soon after this, little Dick comes running in one evening, and tells them he has seen his sister Olivia carried off in a post-chaise by two gentlemen. The Vicar, filled with a father's indignation, seizes his pistols, and is about to follow, but his wife counsels patience. "My dearest, dearest husband," cried she, "the Bible is the only weapon that is fit for your old hands now. Open that, my love, and read our anguish into patience." The Vicar makes inquiries,

and suspicion appears to point to Mr. Burchell. The Vicar then sets out to find his child, but is taken ill, and laid up for three weeks at a little inn. As soon as he recovers, he determines to give up his fruitless search and return home. On the road he falls in with a troop of strolling players, who are going to a great house to play for the servants' amusement, while their master and mistress are out. He goes to the house on the invitation of the butler, who passes himself off as the master. During the evening the master and mistress return unexpectedly, and with them Miss Wilmot, who had been engaged to George Primrose. The Vicar is invited to stay, and tickets are taken for a performance by the players. This takes place in the barn, and in the front seats are placed the Vicar, Miss Wilmot, and her friends. A new actor has been announced, and as soon as he steps upon the stage, the Vicar and Miss Wilmot recognise him at once as George Primrose. He is immediately invited to return with them to the Hall, and there gives his father an account of his adventures in London in seeking work, many of which are taken from Goldsmith's own early struggles. While they are at the Hall, Mr. Thornhill, the Squire, comes to pay his addresses to Miss Wilmot, and he offers George Primrose a commission in a regiment going to the West Indies.

On his way home the Vicar stops at a little wayside inn, and he finds a lady has been staying there, but who can no longer pay for her lodging, and is about to be turned out by the landlady. The Vicar hears her voice pleading to be allowed to remain, for death will soon release her. He recognises the voice as that of Olivia, and flies to her rescue, takes her to his arms and comforts her. He then finds that it was not Mr. Burchell, but Mr. Thornhill, who had carried her off, and that she had been married to him. The Vicar takes her with him, but leaves her to rest at an inn about five miles from their home, while he hurries on to tell the good news. "And

now," he says, "my heart caught new sensations of pleasure the nearer I approached that peaceful mansion. As a bird that had been frightened from its nest, my affections outwent my haste, and hovered around my little fireside with all the rapture of expectation. I called up the many fond things I had to say, and anticipated the welcome I was to receive; I already felt my wife's tender embrace, and smiled at the joy of my little ones. As I walked but slowly, the night waned apace; the labourers of the day were all retired to rest; the lights were out in every cottage; no sounds were heard but of the shrilling cock and deep-mouthed watch-dog. I approached my little abode of pleasure, and before I was within a furlong of the place, our honest mastiff came running to welcome me. It was now near midnight that I came to knock at my door. All was still and silent. My heart dilated with unutterable happiness, when, to my amazement, I saw the house bursting out in a blaze of fire, and every aperture red with conflagration. I gave a loud convulsive outcry, and fell upon the pavement insensible."

This alarmed Moses, and soon all were awake, and the Vicar himself saves the two little boys, just as the roof falls in. The house was burnt, and with it their goods and the banknotes reserved for the fortunes of the daughters; but the family were safe, and the Vicar says: "Now let the flames burn on, all my possessions perish, I have saved my treasures, and we shall yet be happy."

An outhouse is all the shelter they now have, and here they receive Olivia the next morning. Soon fresh troubles come upon them. The Squire demands his rent, and the payment of money towards George's commission; and, unable to meet these demands, the Vicar is carried off on a cold winter's morning, while still suffering from the burns incurred in saving the little boys, to the gaol for debt. A small lodging near is taken for Mrs. Primrose and the daughters, while Moses and the two younger sons are allowed

to share their father's prison. Here the Vicar at once encourages them to find out the duties of their new position, instead of mourning over its painfulness. Sophia is set to tend her sister, whose health suffers from all she has gone through. His wife is to cheer and comfort him. The little boys to read to them; and Moses to find work as a day labourer for the support of the family. The state of the prisoners next engages the Vicar's attention, and he determines to use every endeavour to reclaim them and do them good. He reads them part of the Church Service, and then speaks to them in a cheerful kindly manner. He puts before them the hard service of the devil and the good and loving service of God. At first there was laughter and scoffing, but in the end some of the prisoners took him by the hand, and "swore he was a very honest fellow." In the prison the Vicar meets the rogue who had persuaded Moses to take the copper-rimmed spectacles, and has much talk with him. Patiently the good Vicar continues his teaching and pleading among the wretched beings around him in the gaol, using his own troubles as a means of bringing hope and light to others. In answer to his wife's objections that he should associate with persons so degraded, he says: "If these wretches were princes there would be thousands ready to minister to them, but, in my opinion, the heart that is buried in a dungeon is as precious as that raised upon a throne. Yes, if I can mend them, I will. Perhaps they will not all despise me. Perhaps I may catch up even one from the gulf, that will be a great gain; for is there upon earth a gem so precious as the human soul?"

The Vicar saw that the idleness of the prisoners was a great source of the evils among them, and he therefore set to work to teach them to cut shoe-pegs and tobacco-stoppers which might be sold, so that each could earn a little money and provide for themselves those things that prisons in those days did not afford them. In a fortnight there was a

great change in the prison. Goldsmith here forestalls the thought and care for criminals which has since been more fully developed.

But the troubles of the Primrose family were not yet over. Olivia seemed to be dying; Sophia was now carried off, but rescued by Mr. Burchell; and George was brought to the prison, wounded and in fetters, accused of injuring a servant of Mr. Thornhill, whom he had sent to attack George in answer to a challenge he had sent the Squire. Under this heaviest burden of sorrows the Vicar still rises in faith and hope in God. He is unable to go among the prisoners, but reclining on the straw against the wall of his cell he speaks to those who gather round him of God's love, and of the glories and joys of heaven.

And now the victory of faith and patience was fairly won, and the dark cloud began to pass away. The lesson had been taught the Primrose family of the real greatness of truth and right, and the folly and deception of mere earthly glitter. There were bright days still in store for them, the brighter and the happier for all they had gone through; and as it was after the trials of Job, "the latter end was more than the beginning."

It turns out that Mr. Burchell is Sir William Thornhill, uncle of the Squire—a man of large fortune, and "one to whom senates listened with applause." He had come down in disguise to look after his nephew. He sets everything right. The Vicar is released from prison, and George also. Mr. Thornhill's marriage to Olivia is made known. George marries Miss Wilmot, and Sir William Thornhill Sophia. The merchant who had made off with the Vicar's fortune is arrested at Antwerp, and a part of it is recovered. And the good Vicar concludes his story with "It now only remained that my gratitude in good fortune should exceed my former submission in adversity."

In Goldsmith's two comedies, *She Stoops to Conquer*,

and *The Good-natured Man*, there is a reaction against the false sentimentality of the time, which showed itself in affectation of exaggerated sympathy, and not in the genuine love of each human being, as in "The Vicar of Wakefield." The characters are also a protest against the idea that refinement dwelt among certain classes of persons, or under certain conditions of life, and that in these only were to be found fit subjects for literature.

Goldsmith's two longer poems, "The Traveller" and "The Deserted Village," mark no less than his prose works his sympathy with the advancing thought of the time. There are in them, indeed, the germs of truths which belong rather to the nineteenth century than to the eighteenth; for they were not generally perceived until after the French Revolution had taught its lessons, and they form even now central ideas in the teaching of the great poets and writers of our own day. In "The Traveller" Goldsmith passes over the different countries of Europe, and shows how in each the true happiness of life depends on things outside systems of government, and which cannot be procured by political changes alone. He looks at Italy, and sees in the profusion of Nature's bounties man placed almost without the need of labour; but though free from toil, he is sunk in ignorance and degradation, and while—

> "In florid beauty groves and fields appear,
> Man seems the only growth that dwindles here."

The Traveller turns to Switzerland, the land of republican equality, where the peasant—

> "Sees his little lot the lot of all;
> Sees no contiguous palace rear its head,
> To shame the meanness of his humble shed."

But the very absence of any class above him cramps his ambition, and checks civilisation and refinement—

"Yet let them only share the praises due;
If few their wants, their pleasures are but few.
For every want that stimulates the breast
Becomes a source of pleasure when redrest;
Whence from such lands each pleasing science flies
That first excites desires and then supplies.
Unknown those powers that raise the soul to flame,
Catch every nerve, and vibrate through the frame.
Their level life is but a smouldering fire
Unquenched by want, unfanned by strong desire,
Unfit for raptures, or if raptures cheer
On some high festival of once a year,
In wild excess the vulgar breast takes fire
Till, buried in debauch, the bliss expire.
But not their joys alone thus coarsely flow,
Their morals, like their pleasures, are but low;
For as refinement steps from sire to son,
Unaltered, unimproved the manners run."

Then the Traveller looks at France, with its splendid Court and rich nobles; but here corruption, frivolity, and tawdry ostentation have spread from the Court among the people, and they are idle and vain. In Holland industry has brought wealth, but—

"At gold's superior charms all freedom flies,
The needy sell it, and the rich man buys;
A land of tyrants and a den of slaves."

The Traveller returns home to England, the land of freedom.

"But fostered e'en by Freedom, ills annoy:
That independence Britons prize too high
Keeps man from man, and breaks the social tie.
The self-dependent lordlings stand alone,
All claims that bind and sweeten life unknown.
Here, by the bonds of Nature feebly held,
Minds combat minds, repelling and repelled,
Ferments arise, imprisoned factions roar,
Represt ambition struggles round her shore.

> Nor this the worst. As Nature's ties decay,
> As duty, love, and honour fail to sway,
> Fictitious bonds, the bonds of wealth and law,
> Still gather strength, and force unwilling awe."

Seeing thus in every state evils which no legislature or special form of government can prevent or cure, Goldsmith looks to the growth of each individual man, and to the rule of "reason, faith, and conscience," as the means by which evils are overcome and happiness secured.

> " Vain, very vain, my weary search to find
> That bliss which only centres in the mind.
> How small, of all that human hearts endure,
> That part which laws or kings can cause or cure!
> Still to ourselves in every place consigned,
> Our own felicity we make or find.
> With secret course, which no loud storms annoy,
> Glides the smooth current of domestic joy.
> The lifted axe, the agonising wheel,
> Luke's iron crown, and Damien's bed of steel,
> To men remote from power but rarely known,
> Leave reason, faith, and conscience all our own."

In "The Deserted Village," Goldsmith sees the result of the commercial prosperity of which England was beginning to boast, as the source of greatness and happiness. It seemed to him that the amassing of large fortunes by a few was the cause of impoverishing many, and that wealth and luxury must exist at the expense of excessive toil and poverty among the labouring class. Those who thus made large fortunes in trade bought up the land once tilled by the peasants in order to build mansions and make parks, so that the poor were obliged to leave their country and find the means of life in other lands.

> " Ill fares the land, to hastening ills a prey,
> Where wealth accumulates and men decay.
> Princes and lords may flourish, or may fade,
> A breath can make them, as a breath has made;

But a bold peasantry, their country's pride,
When once destroyed can never be supplied."

In the rising commercial prosperity of the time, Goldsmith sees a false splendour gilding a certain class, but not a means of raising and providing for the poor. The true greatness of a nation consists in each individual having his share in the prosperity—

" Ye friends to truth, ye statesmen who survey
The rich man's joys increase, the poor's decay,
'Tis yours to judge how wide the limits stand
Between a splendid and a happy land.
Proud swells the tide with load of freighted ore,
And shouting folly hails them from her shore ;
Hoards e'en beyond the miser's wish abound,
And rich men flock from all the world around.
Yet count our gains. This wealth is but a name
That leaves our useful products still the same.
Not so the loss. The man of wealth and pride
Takes up a space that many poor supplied—
Space for his lake, his park's extended bounds,
Space for his horses, equipage, and hounds—
While thus the land adorned for pleasure all
In barren splendour feebly waits the fall."

The "deserted village" is "Sweet Auburn," once "the loveliest village of the plain;" but the village population has been turned out, and obliged to emigrate, for "one only master grasps the whole domain," and the peasants' little fields have been turned into one large estate.

We shall see later on how the line of thought started by Goldsmith is followed in Cowper, the poet of the close of the eighteenth century, and in Wordsworth, the poet of the nineteenth.

CHAPTER XX.

SAMUEL JOHNSON AND HIS FRIENDS (1709—1784).

THE great activity of original and independent thought which preceded the French Revolution led not only to the overturning of political tyranny, and the reconstruction of government, but it roused men to examine into all social forms and customs, and to see whether these were placed on a true basis, and whether they were fulfilling rightly the reason of their existence. One of the most important directions taken by this spirit of the time was that relating to the true position of literature, and the right of the author to live by the just payment of his work. In earlier times, when readers were few, this might have been impossible, but now education had made many readers, and created a demand for books; still, however, literature was regarded too much as a means for gratifying the vanity of a writer, and as giving opportunity to a rich man to patronise intellect, and keep it in his pay. Pope had attacked this system, and Swift and Steele and Goldsmith had held themselves, in a measure, independent of patronage; but it needed great strength of character in an author to keep himself wholly free from the service of any party, and great courage and self-denial to be the first to trust to the general intelligence of the people to find out the merit of his work, and to pay him for it according to its real value. There is high honour due, therefore, to Samuel Johnson, who was the first to lead the way along the nobler path of honest, hard work, with a free mind and will, instead of living a life of dependence

on the bounty of others, for which flattery and the use of the author's pen were expected in return. Johnson's work, therefore, in relation to English literature is most important, and reaches beyond the influence of his books themselves; for it is the beginning of a new era, such as Milton foresaw in his "Areopagitica," when literature, free from all the shackles of public interference or private interest, should assert the truth with simple faith and courage, trusting to God, and to the light of God in man, for its recognition and reception.

Samuel Johnson was born on the 18th of September, 1709. He was the son of a bookseller at Lichfield, and was named Samuel after Dr. Swinfen, who was lodging in the house. He was naturally of an unhealthy constitution, and he suffered from this all his life long. It affected his nerves and muscles, and gave him odd twitchings and contortions of his face, and made him most clumsy and awkward in his movements; there was a fear, also, that disease might at some time attack his brain, and bring on insanity; but it was a part of his brave life to struggle against all these difficulties, instead of making them an excuse for idleness and self-indulgence. At seven years old he was sent to Lichfield Grammar School, where Addison had been more than thirty years before. At fifteen he went to school at Stourbridge, where he gave help in teaching in return for instruction. With some aid from his godfather, Dr. Swinfen, he went to Oxford when he was nineteen. He had made up his mind to "fight his way by literature," and he already showed the way he meant to do it. On one occasion, when some one saw that the poor scholar was in want of new shoes, and put a pair at his door, Johnson indignantly threw them down-stairs. Want of money, probably, prevented his returning home even for the vacations, and the length of his residence at the university is not exactly known. Illness or poverty caused him to leave before he had taken his degree. In 1731 his father died, leaving him £20, and he then had

to find a living for himself. He felt the time had not come for his literary work—he was only twenty-three, and had no interest or introductions; but with the view probably of still carrying on his own study and preparation for work, he went to be usher in a school at Market Bosworth. His life here was not a happy one; his peculiarities excited the ridicule of the boys, and, unable any longer to endure it, he gave it up and went to Birmingham, to stay with an old school-fellow who was lodging at a bookseller's. Here he got five guineas for translating Father Lobo's "Voyage to Abyssinia." After his return home he wrote a little for the *Gentleman's Magazine*, which had been started by Edward Cave the year before. At Birmingham Johnson had met with a Mrs. Porter, the widow of a mercer there, and in 1736 she became his wife. She was twenty-one years older than he was; but they were much attached to one another, and eighteen years after her death Johnson wrote: "When I recollect the time we lived together, my grief for her departure is not abated, and I have less pleasure in any good that befalls me because she does not partake it. On many occasions I think what she would have said or done. When I saw the sea at Brighthelmstone I wished for her to have seen it with me. But with respect to her, no rational wish is now left but that we may meet at last where the mercy of God shall make us happy, and perhaps make us instrumental to the happiness of each other."

Mrs. Johnson had £800, and with this Johnson determined to begin a school. An advertisement announced in the *Gentleman's Magazine* that "At Edial, near Lichfield, young gentlemen are boarded and taught the Latin and Greek languages by Samuel Johnson." But young gentlemen did not come to be taught; at least, only three appear to have become Johnson's pupils; two of these were David Garrick and his brother, sons of Captain Garrick. At the end of a year and a half the school had to be given up.

Johnson still held firmly to his resolution to live by literature, and while keeping a school he had begun a tragedy—*Irene*. He now determined to come up to London and work his way there. David Garrick came with him, and in later years became the greatest actor of the time, besides being the writer and adapter of many plays. Mrs. Johnson stayed for a while at Edial or in Lichfield. All that Johnson endured during his first years in London he told to no man. He often used to say that "he hated a grumbler," and he was not a man, at any time of his life, to claim pity as an unappreciated author. He knew what he was doing, and that it was no one's fault that booksellers declined the risk of publishing without the name of some great patron to introduce the author to the public. But still he worked bravely and patiently on, until publishers learned that good work could be appreciated by the sound sense of the public, and would find a sale without a patron's name attached to it. He made translations and wrote accounts of the proceedings in Parliament for the *Gentleman's Magazine*. In one of his letters to Cave, the editor, he signs himself "Yours, *Impransus*," or dinnerless.

In 1738 appeared his first poem, on "London." It was no second-hand description neatly put into verse, as were many of the poems of the time, but it expressed through a vigorous imitation of the third satire of Juvenal, his own depth of actual experience and observation as a struggling worker in the great city. Its reality gave it power at once to touch the hearts of others, and within a week a second edition of it was called for. Pope made inquiries for the unknown author, and friends began to gather round him. Still he did not hang on these, and his life was one of continued hard work and self-denial.

In 1747 Johnson began to plan his "Dictionary." This was a work of the most laborious kind, and was, besides,

considered, as he himself says, to be "a book that requires neither the light of learning nor the activity of genius, but may be successfully performed, without any higher quality than that of bearing burdens with dull patience." It was an invaluable gift to literature, but was not literature itself, and the author was likely to be lost sight of by those who were reaping the results of his labour. It took him eight years to complete the "Dictionary," but the whole of his time was not given to it. In 1748 he wrote another poem, "The Vanity of Human Wishes," an imitation of the tenth satire of Juvenal. It was not the vanity of human life itself which he satirised, but the empty, selfish desire for individual distinction and personal glory at the expense of the general good. For the best blessings of life man does not seek in vain:—

> "Pour forth thy fervours for a healthful mind,
> Obedient passions, and a will resigned;
> For love, which scarce collective men can fill;
> For patience, sovereign o'er transmuted ill;
> For faith that, panting for a happier seat,
> Counts Death kind Nature's signal of retreat.
> These goods for man the laws of heaven ordain,
> These goods He grants who grants the power to gain;
> With these celestial Wisdom calms the mind,
> And makes the happiness she does not find."

All this time Johnson's play, *Irene*, had never been put on the stage. It had not enough play of fancy and brightness of dialogue to make a good acting play, and managers had refused it; but in 1749 David Garrick had become the manager of Drury Lane Theatre, and he determined to bring out the play of his friend and old master. Garrick gave it his best acting; and Johnson's friends and admirers went to see and applaud it; but the general public did not care for it, so after it had been played for nine nights it was withdrawn. Johnson received, however, nearly £300 as his share of the profits.

Another work on which Johnson was engaged during these years was a paper after the form of the *Tatler* and *Spectator*. It was called the *Rambler*, and had the same earnest intention as Steele and Addison's papers; but while seeking to raise the tone of society, it was wanting in the genial humour and light touch of kindly satire that made even the severe censures of the *Tatler* and *Spectator* such delightful reading. The *Rambler* was continued for two years. It brought Johnson in about four guineas a week, and it gave pleasure to his wife, who greatly enjoyed reading the papers. This must have been some comfort to Johnson, for his wife had been for some time in declining health; and three days after the last *Rambler* was published she died. This was, as we have seen, a life-long sorrow to Johnson. He never ceased to keep fresh in his mind the memory of their life together. She had borne with him all the struggles of his uphill work, and though little is known of her, she evidently had the rare courage and self-denial which, added to her love for her husband, enabled her to sustain him in his life of honest, literary work, without repining that it brought in so much less money than many other employments.

In 1755 the "Dictionary" was finished; and for the next few years Johnson wrote little, with the exception of a few papers contributed to the *Adventurer* and some numbers of a paper called the *Idler*. He complained that he had grown idle and indisposed to work. Probably his brain needed rest; but meantime he had no one but himself to work for, and he perhaps cared less to exert himself on that account. His money fell short, and when, in 1759, his mother, who was now ninety, became ill and was in want, Johnson had no money either to send to her or to spend in going to see her. He borrowed some of his printer, which he could repay by literary work, and he sent his mother twelve guineas, and a letter, in which he writes:—

"You have been the best mother, and I believe the best woman in the world. I thank you for your indulgence to me, and beg forgiveness of all that I have done ill, and of all that I have omitted to do well. God grant you His Holy Spirit, and receive you to everlasting happiness, for Jesus Christ's sake. Amen. Lord Jesus receive your spirit.

"I am, dear, dear mother,

"Your dutiful son,

"SAMUEL JOHNSON."

In order to pay the expenses of his mother's funeral, Johnson set to work, and in one week wrote "Rasselas." This was a story of a prince named Rasselas, who had lived all his life in a valley in Abyssinia. Johnson's first work had been the translation of Father Lobo's "Travels in Abyssinia," and he could draw on that for descriptions. The valley in which the princes of Abyssinia were brought up was called the Happy Valley. Everything was done to supply every possible wish and want of the princes. They lived here shut out from all the care and misery of the world; but they were not satisfied, and at last Rasselas and his sister escape from the Happy Valley, and with Imlac, an old philosopher and poet, they travel about and see the world. The impression they receive from all they see is that everywhere there are sin and misery, and that man must look beyond this world for perfect happiness.

After the accession of George III. a proposal was made to settle a pension of £300 a year on Johnson, as an acknowledgment of the valuable work he had done in his "Dictionary" and other writings. He at first hesitated about accepting it; but on being assured that it was an acknowledgment of work already done, and not a means of securing his pen in aid of the Government, he consented to take it.

The burden of providing the means of living was now removed from him, and he could afford to rest. His principal writings after this were an edition of Shakespeare, "The Lives of the Poets," "An Account of a Visit to the

Hebrides," and some political pamphlets. He was asked by his publishers to write the lives of the poets since the Commonwealth, and when one of his friends said to him, "They will ask you to write the life of some dunce—will you do that, sir?" "Yes," replied Johnson, "and I shall say he was a dunce."

Though Johnson wrote little during his later years, he said much. He became the idol of a large circle of friends and admirers, and his influence over the society of the day was a power as great as his writings. The honest, independent fashion in which he had worked his way up to his present position made him no enemies and commanded the respect of all. He had no patrons whom he feared to offend; he was free to enter every circle; and his kindly nature and large heart delighted to make a new acquaintance, and, if worthy, to include him among his friends. The effect of Johnson's manly independence of character in asserting the freedom of literature, and thus raising the social position of literary men, can scarcely be overestimated.

In 1764 had been formed a club known afterwards as the Literary Club, of which Johnson was the ruling monarch. The members met at the "Turk's Head," in Gerard Street. At first they had supper together once a week, but afterwards they dined together once a fortnight. Amongst the founders was Sir Joshua Reynolds. He was one of the best painters of the day, as his charming portraits, so full of grace and sweetness, still live to testify. He had much to do with the founding of the Royal Academy, and was its first president; he also gave to its earliest students some lectures on art which were afterwards published.

Johnson and Reynolds first met in 1752, and a strong, life-long friendship sprang up at once between them. Johnson passed many evenings at Reynolds' house, and met there a great deal of society. It was presided over by Miss

Reynolds, Sir Joshua's sister, who was also a great friend of Johnson's.

Another remarkable member of the Literary Club was Edmund Burke. Of him Johnson once said, "If a man went under a shed at the same time with Burke to avoid a shower, he would say, 'This is an extraordinary man.'" Burke had come to London from Ireland, and for a while he studied law; but he soon became known as a writer of essays on political subjects in various periodicals. In 1756 he published a pamphlet upon the revolt going on in France against civilisation and religion, in which some English writers, and especially Bolingbroke, had joined. It was, as we have seen, a reaction against the corruption of society and of the Church. Burke's pamphlet was a satire, in which he cleverly imitated the style of Bolingbroke, which he had heard called "inimitable." He called his pamphlet "A Vindication of Natural Society, or a View of the Miseries and Evils arising to Mankind from every Species of Artificial Society." Burke's next work was his "Essay on the Sublime and Beautiful."

On Christmas Day, 1758, Burke dined at Garrick's house, and there he met Dr. Johnson for the first time, and they at once became warm friends. When the Club was formed, a few years later, Burke became one of its first members; and his vigorous power in conversation and debate at the meetings of the club attracted the attention of a Mr. FitzHerbert, who introduced him to the Marquis of Rockingham; soon afterwards the latter became Prime Minister, and Burke was made his private secretary. Another friend of Mr. FitzHerbert procured Burke's election as member of Parliament for Wendover. Burke now entered upon political life, in which he soon distinguished himself. His chief writings after this time were pamphlets on political subjects. In 1773 he published "Thoughts on the Causes of the Present Discontents," in which he attributed the

evils of the time to the existence of a "double Cabinet;" the ministers being overruled by the "king's friends," who were his actual advisers, and the House of Commons having become the instrument of their designs rather than the expression of the real opinion of the people. During the debate on the American taxation Burke made a great speech, which was also published. He opposed the taxation of America, but was anxious to keep the colonies under the rule of England. Later on, Burke entered warmly into the conflict stirred by the French Revolution. He was unfriendly to arbitrary rule, but desired on the side of law and order to put down by war the excesses of the French people; his heart too was touched and his chivalrous nature roused by the sorrows and insults which Marie Antoinette had to suffer. In 1790 he published his "Reflections on the Revolution in France," and the next year his "Thoughts on French Affairs."

Burke lived till 1797, but his last years were saddened by the death of his only son. He had been anxious for the title of Earl of Beaconsfield, in order that it might pass to his son and his descendants; and in accordance with the wish for his son to take a place among the English nobility, he had opposed his marriage to a young lady who was companion to his mother. The struggle of feeling in the young Burke was great. He was deeply attached to the young lady, and he loved his father. He fell into a consumption, and died, just after he had been returned as member of Parliament for Malton. The great hope of Burke's life was gone. He no more cared to be Earl of Beaconsfield, and he died three years afterwards.

Other members of the club who have a place in English literature were Goldsmith, Garrick, Percy (a collector of old ballads), Adam Smith, one of the first writers on political economy, and author of "The Wealth of Nations;" Gibbon, who wrote the history of "The Decline

and Fall of the Roman Empire;" Sheridan, the dramatist, author of *The School for Scandal*, and *The Rivals;* and Boswell, who was to write the life of Johnson himself. Besides these there were many others of less note, or distinguished in other ways than in literature.

Boswell was a Scotchman, who came up to London anxious to make the acquaintance of the great men of the day, and desiring especially to be introduced to Dr. Johnson. He was one day drinking tea with Mr. Davies, a bookseller, when Dr. Johnson came into the shop, and Boswell seized his long-wished-for opportunity to be introduced to him. From that time Boswell became the attached follower and friend of Johnson. He listened to his conversation, and noted it down; he asked him questions, and learned his opinions on every subject; and after Johnson's death Boswell was able to give to the world the most complete picture-biography that has been ever seen. Even at this day we seem to hear Johnson's voice rolling out his opinions in the ponderous language of that time, and can imagine ourselves a part of that circle, listening around him; and we know all his little tricks of manner, his habits and ways, his favourite dishes, the number of cups of tea he used to drink, better than those of many a living acquaintance.

Besides the members of the club, Johnson had some intimate friends among the ladies whom he used to meet in society. One of the chief of these was Mrs. Thrale. Her husband was a brewer, and had a house at Streatham; and here Johnson was always welcome, and it became to him as a second home. She was a clever, lively woman, and her cheerful disposition helped to brighten many a dark and lonely hour of Johnson's later days. She nursed him in illness, and bore all the irritability, to which he had become subject in his later years, with a daughter's patience, and he on his part treated her with the kindness and fidelity of a father. After her husband's death, Mrs. Thrale married a

Mr. Piozzi, an Italian. This second marriage displeased Johnson, and she could not forgive the disapproval he expressed at it, so that the friendship was broken off.

Johnson had a fatherly friendship also for Miss Fanny Burney. She was the daughter of Dr. Burney, a well-known musician and teacher of music, at whose house a variety of literary and fashionable society used to meet. Fanny was a quiet, observant girl, who escaped the notice of those around her until, to the astonishment of everybody, it became known that she was the authoress of a novel which all the world was reading and admiring. She had written her story without the knowledge even of her own family, and a publisher bought the copyright of her for twenty pounds, without knowing her name. The story was called "Evelina." It is the history of a young girl, an orphan, with high connections on her mother's side, and some very vulgar ones on her father's, who is making her first entrance into the world. There are spirited, humorous pictures of the society of the day, both among the upper and middle classes, and clever sketches of character; and the book charmed and delighted all classes of readers. It was published anonymously, and by a publisher but little known. It made its way therefore into public favour solely by its own merits, and was thus another proof of how safely an author might trust to the worth of his work for its success, without seeking the introduction of patronage and interest. This alone would be a recommendation of the book to Johnson, but he thoroughly enjoyed the brightness and fun of the story itself, and became the fast friend of the young authoress. When she was writing her second novel, "Cecilia," he gave her help and counsel.

Johnson's kindly interest in all earnest work is shown in his reception and appreciation of Hannah More and her sisters. There were five Miss Mores, who had a school in Bristol. They were all intelligent, well-educated women,

and Hannah, the fourth sister, had written one or two ballads, after the fashion of the day. In a holiday time Hannah and her sister Sally came up to London; Miss Reynolds introduced them to Johnson, and after meeting him a few times in society, Johnson invited himself to tea with the two sisters in their lodgings. The next day Miss Hannah and Miss Sally write their accounts of the evening to the three sisters at home. Miss Hannah says: "I never spent an evening more pleasantly or more profitably. Dr. Johnson, full of wisdom and piety, was very communicative. To enjoy Dr. Johnson perfectly one must have him all to oneself. Our tea was not over till nine o'clock. We then fell upon 'Sir Eldred' [one of her ballads]; he read both poems through, suggested some little alterations in the first, and did me the honour to write one whole stanza." Then Miss Sally goes on: "After much critical discourse with Hannah, Dr. Johnson turns round to me, and with one of his most amiable looks, which must be seen to form the least idea of it, he says, 'I have heard that you are engaged in the useful and honourable employment of teaching young ladies;' upon which we entered upon the history of our birth, parentage, and education, showing how we were born with more desires than guineas, and how, as years increased our appetites, the cupboard at home began to grow too small to gratify them, and how we set out to seek our fortunes, and how we found a great house with nothing in it, and how it was like to remain so till, looking into our knowledge-boxes, we happened to find a little *larning*, a good thing when land is gone, or rather none; and so, at last, by giving a little of this *larning* to those who had less, we got a good store of gold in return, but how, alas! we wanted the wit to keep it. 'I love you both,' cries the *inamorato*. 'I love you all five; I never was at Bristol; I will come on purpose to see you. What! five women all live happily together! I will come and see you. I have spent a happy evening. I

am glad I came; God for ever bless you! You live lives to shame duchesses.' He took his leave with so much warmth and tenderness we were quite affected at his manner."

Dr. Johnson went to see the five Miss Mores in their school at Bristol; and he became the kind friend and adviser of Hannah More, who after a while gave up her work in the school in order to devote herself to literature, and who then spent the greater part of every year in London. In 1777 she wrote a play, *Percy*, which Garrick brought out, and which was considered to be the most successful of all the tragedies put on the stage that winter. Later on she wrote two works on education, which urged the better culture of women, and met objections likely to be brought against it. Hannah More made money by her writings, and so did her sisters in their school; and they lived for many years together at a house called Barley Wood, in Somersetshire. Here they were among the first to carry into action the growing feeling of the time, that all mankind form but one brotherhood, and that each individual may be raised from the misery and degradation of ignorance and sin. In the midst of the greatest difficulties and much opposition, they succeeded in personally establishing schools for the poor in ten different villages among the Mendip Hills, in most of which Christianity in any form was unknown, and the character of the people so violent that no one had ever ventured to enter the villages, even to apprehend known criminals. In connection with this work, Hannah More and her sister Sally began to write stories and ballads for the poor, to be sold very cheaply to hawkers, who would carry them round to the cottages. In this, again, they were the leaders in a new and untried path; for until now none had tried to make literature a means of bringing light and help into lives sunk in sordid toil, or in the deeper degradation of mere brutal existence.

We have now seen Johnson among his friends in society; we must look at him in his home. Here we shall see no solitary lodging, in which a lonely man might make himself comfortable by indulging his selfish tastes and fancies. Johnson's house in Bolt Court was a home for others who had no home but this. A Miss Williams, a friend of Mrs. Johnson's, had come up to London to have an operation performed on her eyes. She became totally blind, and had no means of support; and for more than thirty years she lived in Johnson's house—not always a pleasant inmate, for she had a very bad temper. Another lady who found a home there was Mrs. Dumorelin, the daughter of Johnson's old friend and godfather, Dr. Swinfen; she was a widow and in want. There was besides these a Miss Carmichael; a poor negro, Francis Barber; and a Mr. Levett, who had been a kind of doctor among the poor, but was unable to gain a livelihood. Not one of them was chosen as an agreeable companion, but solely on the ground of need, which Johnson could by self-denial supply; and perhaps of all kinds of self-denial, there is none more pure than the "taking in" of the stranger to the home; to "clothe the naked" and to "visit the sick and imprisoned" are often easy manifestations of love compared with this. Johnson's depth of tenderness and compassion was shown on every occasion. "No man loved the poor like Dr. Johnson," Mrs. Thrale says; and out of his pension of £300 a year he did not spend more than £70 or £80 upon himself. His love for little children and his kindness to animals were also remarkable. At the same time he had a rugged contempt for sentimental sympathy and affected philanthropy, which at the time when it was fashionable to pretend to "exquisite sensibility" often made him speak roughly on matters of overstrained feeling.

During his last years he suffered much from the dread of coming insanity, and would pray to God that his faculties

might be spared to the end; and they were preserved to him in perfect clearness to the last hour of his life. He spoke with earnest, thoughtful words to many of his friends who visited him. He asked his old friend Reynolds to read the Bible; he prayed with his doctor; and he wrote after the usual forms in making his will, "I offer up my soul to the great and merciful God; I offer it full of sin, but in full assurance that it will be cleansed in the blood of my Redeemer." His love for his friends was strong to the last. When three or four were once together with him at the same time, Burke said, "I am afraid that so many of us must be oppressive to you." "No, sir, it is not so," Johnson replied, "and I must be in a wretched state indeed when your company would not be a delight to me." Shortly before his death he said in Latin, "Jam moriturus" (now I am about to die), and, falling into a calm sleep, his soul passed away to God.

"Great souls," says Carlyle, speaking of Johnson, "are always loyally submissive, reverent to what is over them; only small mean souls are otherwise. I could not find a better proof of what I said the other day: that the sincere man was by nature the obedient man, that only in a world of heroes was there loyal obedience to the heroic."

CHAPTER XXI.

POETS OF NATURE AND LIFE IN THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY — THOMSON, DYER, ALLAN RAMSAY, COWPER, ROBERT BURNS (1700—1800).

DURING the sway of the French influence, poetry was written chiefly for the pleasure of a circle of persons living an artificial life, and the subjects for verse were chosen from the ideas and objects most familiar to this class of readers. Nature was used principally for illustration and figures of speech; and minute observation, and personal acquaintance with Nature, were not necessary for this secondary employment of its surface features. The town-bred critics, moreover, were not able to discover any departure from accurate truth, even in this general, broad use of Nature, for their impressions were only derived from second-hand, conventional descriptions. But as readers of poetry were found more and more among the people, many of whom lived in the midst of Nature itself, and had a close acquaintance with it, the demand for correctness in descriptions of Nature became increasingly greater; and we find two poets of the eighteenth century rising to fame by their fresh and careful painting of the real beauty of Nature.

The chief of these was James Thomson. He was born in 1700, in a little Scotch village in Roxburghshire, and he spent his youth on the slopes of the Cheviot Hills, far away from the life of cities. Here, before he began to call himself a poet, he would notice with the poet's eye for beauty the changing effects of the seasons, the sunrise and sunset,

the passing of clouds and storms over the hills, the habits and songs of the birds, the minute beauty of the flowers and insects; and all these impressions, derived from Nature itself, dwelt in his mind, and are truthfully described in his poetry. Here, too, he was familiar with the simpler modes of life, in which every one expressed truthfully his own thoughts and feelings without restraint, and he could see the real sources of life's gladness and sorrow. This personal acquaintance with the works of God in their sublimity and minute beauty, and this knowledge of man as man, made him a true poet of Nature, full of reverent love for her, calling on the world to admire her beauty, instead of using it merely to adorn his feelings and fancies.

In 1720 Thomson was a student of divinity at Edinburgh, where he wrote an essay on "A Country Life" for the *Edinburgh Miscellany*. Five years after this he came up to London, and by the aid of a college friend obtained a situation as tutor to the little son of Lord Binning. He now began to write a poem on "Winter," which was published in 1726, and to this he afterwards added "Spring, Summer, and Autumn." The four poems were a description of Nature throughout the changes of the year, and were called "The Seasons." The freshness and truth of the descriptions were new at that time, and brought into the artificial life of the town the scent of fields and flowers, the murmur of brooks and summer breezes, and gleams of the glory of sunrise and sunset. But the "Seasons" were not only pictures of the silent beauty of Nature; human life is present everywhere throughout the poem. Thomson gives to man his true place in the midst of Nature. He shows him in his simple dignity as lord of the material world, which is the sphere of his intelligence and work; and again in his high office as Nature's priest, giving expression to the universal song of praise and worship for ever ascending to God, the Maker and Almighty Father of all creation.

In later years Thomson wrote some plays, and, in connection with his friend Mallet, *The Masque of Alfred*, in which there is the national song "Rule Britannia." He also wrote the "Castle of Indolence," after the manner of Spenser—a poem showing the slavery of indolence.

Of the same age as Thomson was John Dyer, and he too was born in a secluded village out of the life of the time. He was the son of a solicitor at Aberglaslyn, in Carmarthenshire. He wished to be a painter, and spent much time in wandering among the hills of Wales sketching and studying Nature. Here, like Thomson, he learned to look on Nature with a reverent love, and was satisfied to simply paint her beauty. Near his home was a hill—Grongar Hill—and he wrote a poem which is a faithful description of the surrounding landscape, as it unfolds itself in ascending Grongar Hill, seen with the eye of an artist and a poet.

"Grongar Hill" was published the same year as Thomson's "Winter." In 1740 Dyer published "Ruins of Rome," a poem describing what he had seen in Rome. He afterwards entered the Church, and became Rector of Coningsby, in Lincolnshire. There he wrote a pastoral poem called "The Fleece," a history of wool, from its growth on the sheep, under the shepherd's care, to its spinning, weaving, and use among men.

The rural life of the peasantry was also made the subject of poetry by Allan Ramsay. He was a poor boy, born among the hills of Clydesdale and Annandale, and working in the lead mines; but he had a poet's delight in old songs and ballads, and his poet's mind told him there was as much pathos and beauty in the homely lives of the poor around him as in the adventures of the ballad heroes and heroines. After some smaller poems, he wrote a rural play, called *The Gentle Shepherd*, the characters and scenes of which were drawn from among the Scotch peasantry. It was

no artificial pastoral, but genuine rustic life, with a true vein of poetry running through it, and its place in literature is important as a return to the essential elements of true poetry—Nature itself, and the simple feelings which "make the whole world kin."

As we pass on towards the close of the eighteenth century we shall find this tendency to cast off the old, false forms increasing more and more. Under the influence of the ideas connected with the French Revolution a cry for simple truth arose; and a deep sympathy with man as man, quite unknown before, began to wake in human hearts. The enthusiasm for liberty and reform was for a liberty and reform in which all were to share; and those things which were held to be the highest blessings of life, and which most ennobled humanity, were seen to be, not the privilege of a class, but the right of every man. A new hopefulness, the fruit of faith and energy, began to take the place of the cold cynicism of the earlier time. The oneness of the new ideas with the very spirit and design of Christianity was at once recognised in England, and the practical results soon took shape in the Sunday-schools and other schemes of education for the poor, missions to the heathen, the anti-slavery movement, reform agitation, and various schemes for helping and raising all mankind.

The love of truth and simplicity, and the wider sympathies of the time, find expression in the poetry of William Cowper. Thomson and Dyer were born in the first year of the century; Cowper was born in 1731, and was seventeen when Thomson died, and twenty-seven when Dyer and Ramsay died. Following in the same path of faithfulness to Nature and human life, Cowper entered into the broader light which closed the eighteenth century, and passed away himself in the first year of the nineteenth century. His life is the touching story of a brave struggle for faith and hope in the midst of circumstances in themselves depressing, and

with a mind most painfully sensitive and disposed to inflict suffering on itself. He was the son of a clergyman, and lost his mother when he was a delicate, shrinking little child only six years old, and needing all her tender cherishing. Many years afterwards he could recall his childish grief at her death, and the shock to his mind when the servants thoughtlessly put him at the nursery window to watch the funeral, and then tried to cheer him by constantly repeating the assurance that his mother would soon return.

"My mother! when I learnt that thou wast dead,
Say, wast thou conscious of the tears I shed?
Hovered thy spirit o'er thy sorrowing son,
Wretch even then, life's journey just begun?
I heard the bell toll'd on thy burial day,
I saw the hearse that bore thee slow away,
And, turning from my nursery window, drew
A long, long sigh, and wept a last adieu!
But was it such? It was. Where thou art gone
Adieus and farewells are a sound unknown.
May I but meet thee on that peaceful shore,
The parting word shall pass my lips no more.
Thy maidens, grieved themselves at my concern,
Oft gave me promise of thy quick return.
What ardently I wished I long believed,
And, disappointed still, was still deceived.
By expectation every day beguiled,
Dupe of to-morrow even from a child.
Thus many a sad to-morrow came and went,
Till, all my stock of infant sorrow spent,
I learned at last submission to my lot;
But though I less deplored thee, ne'er forgot."

It was, perhaps, with the desire of giving him companions, and making his life more cheerful, that Cowper's father sent the little boy to a boarding-school at Market-Strete, in Hertfordshire. Here he became the victim of a big boy's cruel bullying, and being timid and new to school life, he dared not defend himself, nor tell any one

what he was suffering. His terror of this boy was such that he never dared raise his eyes to his face, and in after-years could remember only the buckles he wore on his shoes. After a while his cruelty was found out, and he was expelled, and Cowper was taken from the school. At ten years of age he was sent to Westminster School, where he stayed till he was eighteen. After spending a short time at home, he was articled to an attorney in London. He had in the office as his companion a young man named Thurlow, who afterwards became Lord Chancellor. They neither of them appear to have given much time to the study of the law; for in Southampton Row lived Cowper's uncle, Mr. Ashley Cowper; and he had two charming daughters, Harriet and Theodora, and both Cowper and Thurlow spent a great part of every day at Mr. Ashley Cowper's house. These were the brightest, happiest days of Cowper's life. A strong affection sprang up between himself and Theodora, who is spoken of as "remarkably elegant, and her understanding more than ordinarily good." He lived in the sunshine of sympathy and love for a short while, and then the storm came, and it was all over. As soon as he was called to the bar he asked his uncle's consent to his engagement to Theodora Cowper; but Mr. Ashley Cowper strongly objected to it, and would not listen to the proposal. The cousins were not allowed to meet, and were forbidden to correspond. Soon after, Mr. Ashley Cowper gave up his house in Southampton Row, and they never saw one another again. But Theodora Cowper did not forget her cousin; she loved him through the many years of a long life, and through her sister, who afterwards became Lady Hesketh, did what she could to help and comfort him. She never married.

About this time Cowper lost his father, and his most valued friend, William Russell, was drowned while bathing

in the Thames. The loss at once of so much kindness and love, to one so dependent on it, must have been a terrible shock to Cowper's mind. He had no hope nor ambition in life to strive for, and passed some time in idleness, being perhaps really incapable of work. At length Major Cowper, a relation of his, offered him the office of clerk of the Journals of the House of Lords, and of reading clerk and clerk of Committees. He felt that his friends would expect him to take these, and he accepted one of them, though he shrank at the time from undertaking it. An opposition was raised to Major Cowper's appointment, and it was proposed to examine Cowper at the bar of the House of Lords, to see if he were a fit person for the post. He knew nothing of his duties, and was utterly incapable of standing the examination through nervous terror; he felt he ought to justify Major Cowper in having appointed him, and he strove to prepare himself for the examination. But the struggle was too great; and he became completely insane, and had to be placed under the care of a Dr. Cotton at St. Albans.

Cowper's sensitive mind had felt deeply his uncle's rejection of him as a fit husband for Theodora, and the displeasure of his friends in regard to his reluctance to accept the offices offered him; and he now fancied, in the delusion of his illness, that God could not love such a wretch as he thought himself, and had cast him off for ever. As his mind began to recover, he was able to take comfort in the many assurances of God's love to the greatest sinners, and of the great manifestation of His love in the gift of Jesus Christ His son.

When he was well enough to leave Dr. Cotton's house, his brother took a lodging for him in Huntingdon. Here he was quite alone, and he felt, as he says, "like a traveller in the midst of an inhospitable desert, without a friend to comfort, or a guide to direct him." But he was to find

here the very proof that God's great love and care were providing for him a friend, who was to become his life-long comfort and support, just the friend he wanted to tenderly soothe his irritable mind, to cheer his despondency, and gently stimulate him to the use of his faculties for his own good and that of others.

Mr. Unwin, the son of the clergyman at Huntingdon, was attracted by the appearance of Cowper at church, and seeing him go out afterwards on a solitary walk, young Unwin joined him, and engaged himself to drink tea with him. He afterwards persuaded Cowper to come to his father's house, and a close friendship was soon established. Soon after, young Mr. Unwin went to Cambridge, and the only daughter was married. Just at this time Cowper was wishing to change his lodgings, and an arrangement was made for him to board with Mr. and Mrs. Unwin. Of Mrs. Unwin at this time he wrote, "Mrs. Unwin has almost a maternal affection for me, and I have something very like a filial one for her; and her son and I are brothers. Blessed be the God of our salvation for such companions, and for such a life; above all, for a heart to like it."

Cowper had lived for nearly two years in Mr. Unwin's house, when one Sunday morning, as Mr. Unwin was riding to church, he was thrown from his horse, and so much injured that he could only be carried into a cottage close by, where on Thursday he died. In this time of great trouble, Mr. John Newton, the vicar of Olney, a village in Buckinghamshire, came to see the Unwins; and when Mrs Unwin decided to leave Huntingdon, he was asked to find a house for them in Olney. Cowper was still to reside with Mrs. Unwin, and in 1767 they moved to Olney, where they lived for nineteen years.

Mr. Newton soon became a most intimate friend, although he was in every respect a total contrast to

Cowper, and certainly did not quite understand the very delicate state of Cowper's mind. He had been in early life a wild, rough sailor, exposed to all kinds of danger, and familiar with sin and its terrible consequences. He was now an earnest, warm-hearted servant of God, fearless and honest, not shrinking from looking the most solemn things boldly in the face, and plainly setting before his people the hatred of God to sin. His strong, confident faith may have often cheered Cowper's timid despondency; but, on the other hand, while John Newton's bolder nature and training in danger made it impossible for him to shrink before anything he need not really fear, Cowper's sensitive imagination laid hold of some parts of John Newton's teaching, and he began to fancy himself under the everlasting displeasure of God, and cast out for ever from His love. For a while he was able at times to rise above the delusion; he joined Mr. Newton in his parish work, and in writing a volume of hymns, which were afterwards published under the title of "Olney Hymns;" but in 1773 he sank again into insanity. All this time Mrs. Unwin watched over him with unceasing care, and did all she could to cheer him. For some months he would not leave the house, but at last he was one day persuaded to go and spend a day at the vicarage. While he was there he suddenly made up his mind that he would not return home, and for more than a year he stopped in Mr. Newton's house, a very inconvenient but most kindly treated guest. By degrees he began to amuse himself with gardening, and doing little things about the vicarage. After his return home he found pleasure in keeping pet animals. He had three hares, which he tamed, a little dog named Beau, some rabbits, and several birds. The mute affection of these animals, and their dependence on his kindness and care for them, made him feel the soothing influence of love given and returned. In 1779 Mr. Newton left Olney, and about this time Mrs. Unwin persuaded Cowper to begin writing a longer poem.

This gave him an interest and hope in life, and the health of his mind improved more and more. His first poem was the "Progress of Error;" and then he wrote "Truth," "Table Talk," and "Expostulation." Mr. Newton, who was now living in London, found a publisher for the poems, and before they came out, Cowper added to them "Hope," "Charity," "Conversation," and "Retirement."

While these poems were going through the press, Cowper made a new friend. He saw one day two ladies going into a shop opposite the house. One of them was Mrs. Jones, the wife of a clergyman in the neighbourhood; the other was her widowed sister, Lady Austen. Cowper was so pleased with their appearance, that, contrary to his usual shyness, he asked Mrs. Unwin to invite them to tea. The ladies came; but it was then some time before Cowper could make up his mind to come into the room and see them. Lady Austen was a remarkably lively, agreeable woman. "She laughs and makes laugh," Cowper said of her, and her society had an excellent effect in diverting Cowper's mind and raising his spirits. She told him the story of John Gilpin one evening, when she found him in a melancholy mood, and the next morning he had put it into verse. She persuaded him also that he ought to write another poem in blank verse; and when he answered that he could not find a subject, she replied: "Oh, you can write upon anything—write a poem upon *this sofa.*" Cowper took the subject she had set him, and called his poem "The Task." The first book was on the "Sofa." From the sofa he passed to the effect of luxury, and the increase of wealth; and on this subject he felt much the same as Goldsmith had done. As he wrote other thoughts arose in his mind, and these he treats of in other books of the poem—"The Timepiece," "The Garden," "The Winter Evening," "The Winter Morning Walk," "The Winter Walk at Noon." In all these there are descriptions of Nature, simple and true, and taken from

Cowper's own observation of the scenery on the banks of the Ouse, and around Olney. Before "The Task" was finished the friendship with Lady Austen was over. It seems probable that the influence she had over Cowper was in some way displeasing to Mrs. Unwin. In her unwearied watchfulness over his mind she may have seen that Lady Austen's excitability, her disposition to fall into extravagant praise at one time, and to take offence at another, were dangerous to the calm which she believed needful to his mental health. At any rate, Cowper felt that the long-tried friend, who had been to him, through the keenest trial of affection, all that the tenderest mother could have been, was not to be distressed in any way by the lively new acquaintance, and the intercourse was broken off.

The fame of Cowper's poems brought back to him a renewal of some of the friendships of his early life. Lady Hesketh was now a widow, and a close intimacy was again begun with her, and through her with an anonymous correspondent, who sent Cowper many little presents, and contributed also to his income. This could be no other than Theodora. Lady Hesketh came to stay at Olney; and brought new sunshine into Cowper's life. She thus describes Mrs. Unwin, in writing to her sister Theodora:— "She is very far from grave; on the contrary, she is cheerful and gay, and laughs *de bon cœur* on the smallest provocation. Amidst all the little puritanical words which fall from her *de temps en temps* she seems to have by nature a great fund of gaiety; great, indeed, it must have been, not to have been totally overcome by the close confinement in which she has lived, and the anxiety she must have undergone for one whom she certainly loves as well as one human being can love another. She seems to have a great disposition to cheerfulness and mirth, and indeed had she not, she could not have gone through all she has. I must say, too, that she seems to be very well read in the English poets, as

appears from several little quotations she makes from time to time, and has true taste for what is excellent in that way. There is something truly affectionate and sincere in her manner. No one can express more heartily than she does her joy to have me at Olney; and as this must be for his sake, it is an additional proof of her regard and esteem for him. She does seem in real truth to have no will left on earth but for his good. How she has supported herself (as she has done!), the constant attendance day and night, which she has gone through the last thirteen years, is to me, I confess, incredible. And in justice to her, I must say, she does it all with an ease that relieves you from any idea of its being a state of suffering. She speaks of him in the highest terms; and by her astonishing management, he is never mentioned in Olney but with the highest respect and veneration."

One result of Lady Hesketh's visit was to induce Mrs. Unwin and Cowper to go more into society; and before she left she had persuaded them to leave Olney and remove to Weston-Underwood, a prettier and more cheerful village, near to Olney. At Weston-Underwood, Cowper and Mrs. Unwin lived for nine years. He did not during this time write any long poem, but was engaged in translating Homer's "Iliad." He was still often suffering from mental depression, and Mrs. Unwin's health began to give way. She was seized with paralysis, which took away her power of speaking, and she could only walk with the support of two persons. It was during this time that Cowper wrote the poem, addressed "To Mary," in which he kept in undying remembrance what she had been to him, through the long years of trial they had lived together.

> "The twentieth year is well-nigh past
> Since first our sky was overcast;
> Ah, would that this might be the last!
> My Mary!

"Thy spirits have a fainter flow,
I see thee daily weaker grow;
'Twas my distress that brought thee low,
My Mary!

* * * *

"Thy indistinct expressions seem
Like language uttered in a dream;
Yet me they charm, whate'er the theme,
My Mary!

"Thy silver locks, once auburn bright,
Are still more lovely in my sight
Than golden beams of Orient light,
My Mary!

* * * *

"Such feebleness of limbs thou prov'st,
That now at every step thou mov'st
Upheld by two—yet still thou lov'st,
My Mary!

"And still to love, though press'd with ill,
In wintry age to feel no chill,
With me is to be lovely still,
My Mary!"

Change of air was advised for both the invalids, and in 1795 Cowper and Mrs. Unwin left Weston-Underwood for the seaside; and after moving from one residence to another without benefit, in the October of the next year Mrs. Unwin died. From this time Cowper sank into a state of melancholy from which he never recovered. On the 2nd of May, 1800, his soul passed away from the misery of disease and delusion into immortal freedom and light.

Another writer whose life closes with the last years of the eighteenth century is Robert Burns, the Scottish poet. He represents in himself and in his work the utmost vigour of that revolt of human liberty against human tyranny which was the stimulus of the fierce energy of the French Revolution. But Robert Burns was not a political reformer

nor a social theorist; still less was he one of the many who merely caught the infection of a prevailing enthusiasm. In him the spirit of the time was the natural outcome of a specially clear insight which had never been distorted by the maxims and customs of an artificial life, and this enabled him to see beneath the surface of things, and to detect all that was hollow and unreal; while the intensity of his own sincerity led him to the frank avowal of his own motives and feelings, without any disguise of false sentiment or hypocrisy. It is this strong, clear truthfulness of Burns which gives such powerful reality to every varied expression of feeling in his poems, and which carries his lyrics into the very hearts of his readers. His early training in his Scottish peasant home would not fail to inculcate self-restraint, but this probably was enforced by external authority rather than taught by intelligent appeals to the conscience and reason, and would be felt by him as a yoke to be borne under necessity, instead of a law by which a man should guide and keep in check his own impulses and actions. We must keep this also in mind in order to understand the strangely varied moods and impulses of this greatest of lyric poets.

Robert Burns was the son of a Scottish gardener, who afterwards became a small tenant-farmer. He was born on the 25th of January, 1759, in an old clay cottage, about two miles south of the town of Ayr. The father gave his children such education as he could, but at an early age both Robert and his younger brother Gilbert had to help their father in the work of the little farm. It was only by a hard struggle, in which father, mother, and sons all joined heroically, that the rent could be paid, and a scanty living earned out of the barren soil. The pressure of real want and the threatenings of the factor's letters, which, Burns says, "often used to set us all in tears," roused early in him the strong sense of injustice in the contrast of bitter poverty with useless wealth—

"It's hardly in a body's pow'r
To keep at times frae being sour,
To see how things are shared."

But, as with all greater minds, Burns did not sink down to the level of his circumstances and become absorbed in the almost hopeless effort to gain a living from the farm, or in angry murmurings at his lot. He was full of warm, generous affections, and these kept hope and mirth alive in his heart. Carlyle says, "Burns's brother Gilbert has told me that Robert, in his young days, in spite of their hardships, was usually the gayest of speech, a fellow of infinite frolic, laughter, sense, and heart; far pleasanter to hear there cutting peats in the bog, or such-like, than he ever afterwards knew him. All kinds of gifts, from the gracefullest utterances of courtesy to the highest fire of passionate speech; loud floods of mirth, soft wailings of affection, laconic emphasis, clear piercing insight: all was in him."

Such a nature would soon break into song, like the robin singing joyfully, half-starved in the winter cold; and Burns had scarcely passed out of boyhood before he began to express the varied emotions of his rich nature in lyric verse. He wrote as he spoke, in the dialect of his home, and the subjects of his poems were such as met his eyes in his farm work, or in his life among his village neighbours. He saw in the simplest objects suggestions of tender feeling, sweet beauty—"thoughts that do often lie too deep for tears. Thus the "Mountain Daisy," "wee, modest, crimson-tippèd flower," has only just cheerfully struggled into bloom in the "bitter-biting north wind," when Burns's ploughshare crushes it into the dust, and he sings—

"There, in thy scanty mantle clad,
Thy snawie bosom sunward spread,
Thou lifts thy unassuming head
In humble guise:
But now the share uptears thy bed,
And low thou lies!

"Such is the fate of simple bard,
On life's rough ocean luckless starr'd!
Unskilful he to note the card
Of prudent lore,
Till billows rage, and gales blow hard,
And whelm him o'er.

"Such fate to suffering worth is given,
Who long with wants and woes has striven,
By human pride or cunning driven
To misery's brink,
Till, wrenched of every stay but Heaven,
He, ruin'd, sink!"

Whilst pursuing his daily task, the rude breaking of the ploughshare into the little nest which a field mouse had made for itself, and in which it thought to sleep cosily through the winter, suggests again to Burns how—

"The best laid schemes of mice and men
Gang aft a-gley,
And leave us nought but grief and pain
For promised joy."

Although Burns, in many of his poems, satirises the religious formality which had become among a large portion of the Scottish peasantry more of a habit than the fresh fruit of a living growth, he shows himself in full sympathy with the true religious feeling of the father of the family, gathering his children around him on Saturday night, the week's work over, "to worship God;" and the whole of "The Cottar's Saturday Night" testifies how much the heart of the poet was at one with the simple faith and steadfast domestic affections of his fellow-countrymen. This is also the keynote of the old wife's song to "John Anderson, my Jo."

In "A man's a man for a' that," Burns gives vigorous expression to that simple, direct clear-sightedness which caused him to see through the outward show of wealth and

rank, and to value all that is best and highest in man at its own true merit—

"What though on homely fare we dine,
Wear hodden grey, and a' that;
Gie fools their silks, and knaves their wine,
A man's a man for a' that.
For a' that, and a' that,
Their tinsel show and a' that,
The honest man, though e'er so poor,
Is king o' men for a' that.

"A king can mak a belted knight,
A marquis, duke, and a' that,
But an honest man's aboon his might—
Guid faith he maunna fa' that!
For a' that, and a' that,
Their dignities, and a' that;
The pith o' sense, and pride o' worth,
Are higher ranks than a' that."

Burns's whole life was a struggle with poverty. The farming did not answer; and after the publication of his poems in 1786, he obtained an appointment as excise officer, but the salary never exceeded £70 a year. The later years of his life were brightened by such passing gleams as popular applause can throw into the gloom of troubled and embarrassed circumstances, which pressed upon him more and more. And to this later period belongs his immortal poem of "Tam o' Shanter." He died in his thirty-eighth year, on July 21st, 1796; and twelve thousand persons attended his funeral.

In the last year of the eighteenth century, Thomas Campbell, a young poet, closed the era with a bright outlook into the coming time in his poem, "The Pleasures of Hope."

"Hope! when I mourn with sympathising mind
The wrongs of fate, the woes of human-kind,
Thy blissful omens bid my spirit see
The boundless fields of rapture yet to be;

I watch the wheels of Nature's mazy plan,
And learn the future by the past of man.
Come, bright Improvement on the car of Time,
And rule the spacious world from clime to clime.
Thy handmaid Arts shall every wild explore,
Trace every wave and culture every shore.

* * * * * * *

Ye that the rising morn invidious mark
And hate the light, because your deeds are dark,
Ye that expanding Truth invidious view,
And think, or wish, the Song of Hope untrue,
Perhaps your little hands presume to span
The march of genius and the powers of man;
Perhaps ye watch at Pride's unhallowed shrine,
Her victims newly slain, and thus divine—
'Here shall thy triumphs, genius, cease, and here
Truth, Science, Virtue close your short career;'
Tyrants, in vain ye trace the wizard ring,
In vain ye limit Minds unwearied spring!"

CHAPTER XXII.

REVOLUTION AND REACTION.

After Burns, and in the new century, we find that the strong force which was leading men to question and cast off authority had not lost its energy. It was the springing up of new life, and it could not be stifled or crushed. The wild, destroying power could only be controlled, as men found out that above themselves and above their fellow-men there was a rule to which it was no slavery to submit, but the noblest, freest life—the rule of reason and conscience, the self-controlled obedience of each individual to law and to God. It was the noblest and most enlightened minds which saw this first, the "Happy Warriors," who gained the victory for themselves, and then helped others to conquer too; and of these Wordsworth stands as the leader in this, the great battle of the nineteenth century. There were other poets, his contemporaries, who did not see so far; they felt the crushing weight of artificial forms and needless tyrannies; they looked only at man's representation of God, and they rose in fierce revolt against God and man, and threw off individual allegiance to duty and law.

Byron represents in this way the strong energy of revolt and the bare assertion of self-will as the principle of life. He belonged to a family in which unsoundness of mind seems to have been hereditary, and he was brought up by his mother, who was a capricious and violent woman. There

was nothing in his training to teach him self-control or self-renunciation for the good of others; and, drifting on the current of the time, he rose against the restraints of society and law which in any way interfered with his own individual action. He was born in 1788, and in 1807 published his first collection of short poems, "Hours of Idleness." In the years from 1807 to 1823 he wrote "Childe Harold," "The Giaour," "The Bride of Abydos," "The Corsair," "Lara," "The Prisoner of Chillon," "Manfred," and "Don Juan." Most of these poems are narratives, of which he is himself the hero; and the concentration of thought and feeling around himself caused that natural weariness of the subject which made him look on the world and life with bitterness and disgust.

The power and eloquence with which he appealed to the world for sympathy with himself, and the energy with which he expressed the free spirit of that time, gave his poetry a strong hold over the readers of his own day. It must not be forgotten that, while he asserted for himself and others the unrestrained action of individual selfishness as the principle of life, he had sympathy with the wider aspirations of patriotism. It was with the desire to help others to freedom that, in 1823, he threw himself into the cause of the Greeks, who were then asserting their independence of the Turks, by whom they had been greatly oppressed. Lord Byron went to Greece, and helped to rouse the national feeling of the people, and to unite them as one man in the struggle for liberty. At Missolonghi he was seized with fever, and his constitution being already worn out by his lawless life, he sank under it. There is something sad in his death in a strange land, and without a friend near him; yet compared with his life, it is like the thin gleam of golden sunlight cast across the world at the sunset of a dark, stormy day.

Another poet who in his own way expressed the spirit

of revolt against tyranny, was Percy Bysshe Shelley; but in him it was not so much the desire for individual freedom of action which gave energy to his poetry, as the grand conception he had formed of the "future of the world that was to be." He was of all poets the most ideal; he could imagine a perfection of human character and life far beyond all that had yet been attained; and, like Cowper, he believed in the new hope of a more glorious day. Meantime his spirit rose against all that held men down and thwarted their higher development, with a force equal to his love for man, his faith in the possibilities of a better time, and his earnest longings for its coming. Shelley's power of conceiving the purest ideal led him to see how much there was which had, at different times, entered into man's conception of God that was inconsistent with the perfection of love, justice, and truth; so that the human colouring tinged and distorted the Divine image, like an object seen through a painted window, or as he himself expresses it:—

> "Life, like a dome of many-coloured glass,
> Stains the white radiance of eternity,
> Until Death tramples it to fragments. Die,
> If thou wouldst be with that which thou dost seek."

Shelley desired the immediate realisation of the ideal. Like all the nobler minds of the time, he hoped much from the French Revolution, and when he saw the failure of political theories to regenerate a world not ripe for them, he felt the bitter chill of disappointment; had he lived longer he might have passed onward to the deeper lessons Wordsworth taught—that it is only by individual regeneration and development that the human race advances—and have learnt in faith to work and wait. His intense sympathy with humanity, and the very strength of his love, made him rise against the fires of suffering which are a part of the process of purification and spiritual refinement; he pas-

sionately longed to see man become at once "Good, great, and joyous, beautiful and free;" but in the energy of his love and sympathy he could not bear to look upon the "great tribulation," through which alone man rises to the higher glory.

Shelley's life was short. He was born in 1792; and in 1822 he was drowned by the upsetting of a boat, in crossing the Gulf of Spezzia. His body was recovered, and was burnt on the shore by Lord Byron and some of his friends. The ashes were buried in the Protestant burial-ground at Rome; and on his tomb were written the words—"*Cor cordium*," "Heart of hearts;" fitly expressing that intense depth of sympathy which had beaten in unison with all the sorrows and joys of humanity.

One of Shelley's last poems was "Adonais," a lament for another young poet, John Keats. In Keats the fresh sense of the ideal was also strong; but it was the ideal of beauty which filled his soul. For him the world with all its evil and its wrongs could not be wholly dark and miserable In his first larger poem, "Endymion," he says:—

> "A thing of beauty is a joy for ever;
> Its loveliness increases; it will never
> Pass into nothingness; but still will keep
> A bower quiet for us, and a sleep
> Full of sweet dreams, and health, and quiet breathing.
> Therefore on every morrow are we wreathing
> A flowery band to bind us to the earth,
> Spite of despondence, of the inhuman dearth
> Of noble natures, of the gloomy days,
> Of all the unhealthy and o'er-darkened ways
> Made for our searching; yes, in spite of all,
> Some shape of beauty moves away the pall
> From our dark spirits. Such the sun, the moon,
> Trees old and young, sprouting a shady boon
> For simple sheep; and such are daffodils
> With the green world they live in; and clear rills

That for themselves a cooling covert make
'Gainst the hot season; the mid-forest brake,
Rich with a sprinkling of fair musk-rose blooms.
And such, too, is the grandeur of the dooms
We have imagined for the mighty dead!
All lovely tales that we have heard or read;
An endless fountain of immortal drink,
Pouring unto us from the heaven's brink."

Keats sought beauty in Nature, and in "lovely tales" of human life in past ages; and in "Hyperion" he teaches the lesson, which we are only just beginning to understand, that beauty has its place and work in the elevation of the human race, and that it is the heritage of all.

Keats was consumptive, and died at Rome in his twenty-sixth year, about six months before Shelley's death.

Wordsworth was born in 1770, and was nearly twenty years older than Byron, and more than twenty years older than Shelley and Keats; but he lived till 1850, and his work carries us on from the ferment of the stormy time of the French Revolution into the calm, working days which have succeeded it.

Wordsworth's father was an attorney, living at Cockermouth, in Cumberland. Here he was born, within sight of Skiddaw, and on the border of the Lake District, which is now for ever associated with him. At eight years old he was sent to school at Hawkeshead, in the vale of Esthwaite. The school had been founded by Archbishop Sandys, in 1585; and the boys lodged in different houses near. William Wordsworth and his brother Richard were boarded in the house of Dame Tyson.

Wordsworth thus grew up surrounded by Nature in its grandest and simplest forms; and the influence over his mind and character was very great and lasting. He says—

"Fair seed-time had my soul, and I grew up
Fostered alike by Beauty and by Fear."

From the beauty that surrounded him, Wordsworth's heart was filled with love, and his mind received that depth of calmness which grew to constancy of soul in after-life; and from the fear which is a sense of Nature's grandeur, Wordsworth acquired that reverence and humility which spring up from living in the presence of recognised greatness.

In watching the effects of Nature—the sunshine and storm, the joy and suffering, life and death—Wordsworth tells us he gained that faith in the working together of all things for good and not for evil, the birth of new life through suffering and death. Thus, at the time when hope in the French Revolution was over, and many, seeing the evil, despaired of any coming good, Wordsworth could say—

> "If in this time
> Of dereliction and dismay, I yet
> Despair not of our nature, but retain
> A more than Roman confidence, a faith
> That fails not, in all sorrow my support,
> The blessing of my life; the gift is yours,
> Ye winds and sounding cataracts! 'tis yours,
> Ye mountains! Thine, Oh, Nature!"

Besides the influences of Nature, the freedom and simplicity of the life among the Cumberland hills had also its effect on Wordsworth's mind and character. Among the dalesmen he saw "Man free, man working for himself," living without oppression, and yet with self-restraint and obedience to the laws of God—"plain living and high thinking"—and the exercise of that just judgment which respected every man whose real worth deserved it. Thus he was trained in his earliest years—

> "To an unconscious love and reverence
> Of human nature; hence the human form
> To me became an index of delight,
> Of grace and honour, power and worthiness."

And this early knowledge of what man could be, when true to himself and in harmony with God and duty, helped also to preserve alive in Wordsworth the hope for the future progress of the human race when others had lost it, and enabled him to see the mistakes in the expectations of the French Revolution, and how they arose from not understanding that all human regeneration must be by individual elevation in intelligence and goodness, and not by political schemes alone.

To the influence of books Wordsworth tells us he was also indebted for a part of his training. The kind of books which influenced him were, he says, the "books that teach, as Nature teaches," and do not lead the child to watch with consciousness "each little drop of wisdom as it falls into the dimpling cistern of his heart." He read some of the best writings of English literature, and had a great opinion of the influence of these works in the education of the mind and character, calling them—

> "Powers
> For ever to be hallowed; only less,
> For what we are and what we may become,
> Than Nature's self, which is the breath of God,
> Or His pure Word by miracle revealed."

Wordsworth's was a happy boyhood; the faculties of his mind were brought into healthy exercise; the sense of the beautiful, which is one of the first sources of joy in childhood, was richly fed; and the simple, free, hardy out-of-door life kept alive a constant flow of vigorous spirits. Of himself and his school-fellows he says—

> "We were a noisy crew; the sun in heaven
> Beheld not vales more beautiful than ours;
> Nor saw a band in happiness and joy
> Richer, or worthier of the ground they trod."

When Wordsworth was fourteen, sorrow came into his life, for he lost his father. His mother had died when

he was a little child. His two uncles continued to keep him at school until he was seventeen, when they sent him to St. John's College, Cambridge Wordsworth was so completely a child of the mountains, so accustomed to the simple, free individual life of the Cumberland dales, that he scarcely understood the new world in which he found himself. Into his Cambridge life came the stir of the French Revolution; and the struggle of the French people against the oppression of centuries woke all Wordsworth's sympathies, while his poet's imagination glowed with the glory of hope for the future of the world. To those, he says, who ardently longed for the freedom and elevation of humanity, the Revolution appeared to be its dawn—

> "Oh! pleasant exercise of hope and joy!
> For mighty were the auxiliars which then stood
> Upon our side, we who were strong in love!
> Bliss was it in that dawn to be alive,
> But to be young was very heaven! Oh! times,
> In which the meagre, stale, forbidding ways
> Of custom, law, and statute, took at once
> The attraction of a country in romance!
> When Reason seemed the most to assert her rights,
> When most intent on making of herself
> A prime enchantress—to assist the work,
> Which then was going forward in her name.
> Not favoured spots alone, but the whole earth,
> The beauty wore of promise, that which sets
> The budding rose above the rose full blown.
> What temper at the prospect did not wake
> To happiness unthought of? The inert
> Were roused, and lively natures rapt away."

In his third long vacation Wordsworth and a friend of his made a walking tour in Switzerland. They landed at Calais on the eve of the fête held on the 14th of July, 1790, the anniversary of the taking of the Bastille the year before. Cowper, in his solitude and despondency, hailed the

destruction of this fortress as the downfall of tyranny; and we may imagine the ardent delight and enthusiasm with which the two young undergraduates, "strong in love and hope," joined in the festivities of the rejoicing nation:—

> "France standing on the top of golden hours,
> And human nature seeming born again."

In 1791 Wordsworth took his B.A degree at Cambridge, and after spending a few months in London he went to France, with the idea of learning French; but his whole heart was with the Revolution. In September, 1792, occurred the revolt of the people in Paris, and the terrible massacres, which were encouraged by the leaders of the Revolution. Wordsworth desired to join the more moderate party of the Girondists, in the hope of helping to check the brute violence of the people, and to lead the Revolution onwards to its true results. But the position was one of extreme danger, for six months afterwards the Girondists were guillotined, and Wordsworth might have suffered with them had not his friends compelled him at the end of the year to return to England. The Reign of Terror began in France, and the Revolution closed with the tyranny of a party more outrageously oppressive and brutally cruel than the reign of the worst French monarch. The golden vision of the new world was over, and the cold chill of disappointed hope crept over the hearts of those who had so lately thrilled with the most ardent expectations. To Wordsworth this was a time of intense suffering, and even in after-years the misery of those days often returned to him in dreams, so deeply did the sorrow enter his heart:—

> "Most melancholy at that time, oh! friend,
> Were my day thoughts, my nights were miserable;
> Through months, through years, long after the last beat
> Of those atrocities, the hour of sleep
> To me came rarely charged with natural gifts—

Such ghastly visions had I of despair,
And tyranny, and implements of death,
And levity in dungeons, where the dust
Was laid with tears. Then suddenly the scene
Changed, and the unbroken dream entangled me
In long orations, which I strove to plead
Before unjust tribunals,—with a voice
Laborious, a brain confounded, and a sense,
Deathlike, of treacherous desertion, felt
In the last place of refuge—my own soul."

By degrees Wordsworth came to feel that the atrocities in which the era of the Revolution closed were not caused by the principles of the Revolution itself. These, in themselves, were essential to the highest growth of human nature and the purest ideal of life; but the long course of oppression by which the French nation had become enslaved had built up

"A terrific reservoir of guilt
And ignorance, filled up from age to age,
That could no longer hold its loathsome charge,
But burst and spread in deluge thro' the land."

He saw now that the best political theories are not sufficient in themselves to raise a nation of ignorant, uncontrolled, and yet enslaved men, to the ideal of humanity. But he did not lose hope therefore in the progress of the race. He saw what man could become in those who were enlightened, self-restrained, guided by love and duty, wise in mind and heart, using freedom, not as a licence for outrage, but as space for nobler growth; and then he says:—

"I could not but inquire,
Not with less interest than heretofore,
But greater, though in spirit more subdued,
Why is this glorious creature to be found
One only in ten thousand? What one is
Why may not millions be?"

Then, with a new and more substantial hope, Wordsworth began his work as a poet. He had to make the world see

the high ideal towards which we each one, as individuals, must strive, and help others to strive, if we desire to see the progress of our nation; for no people or world can be improved but by the improvement of each individual composing it. Wordsworth's heart had been deeply wounded by the bitter failure of his dreams; but he did not in his disappointment look with a hopeless sneer at human nature, or throw off faith in God; and just at this time of need, God, "who feeds our hearts for His own service," sent him help and comfort in the companionship of his sister, Dorothy Wordsworth. "Properly, and in a spirit of prophecy," says De Quincey, a friend of Wordsworth's, "was she named Dorothy; in its Greek meaning, *Gift of God.* Well did this name prefigure the relation in which she stood to Wordsworth, the mission with which she was charged—to wait upon him as the tenderest and most faithful of domestics, to love him as a sister, to sympathise with him as a confidante, to counsel him, to cheer him and sustain him by the natural expression of her feelings—so quick, so ardent, so unaffected—upon the probable effect of whatever thoughts or images he might conceive; finally, and above all other ministrations, to ingraft, by her feminine sense of beauty, upon his masculine austerity that delicacy and those graces which else (according to the grateful acknowledgments of his own maturest retrospect) it never could have had:—

> 'She gave me eyes, she gave me ears,
> And humble cares and delicate fears;
> A heart the fountain of sweet tears,
> And love and thought and joy.'"

And of her influence over his character in developing all the little tender, sweet graces, in which till then he had been wanting, he says:—

> "Thou didst soften down
> This over sternness; but for thee, dear friend,

My soul, too reckless of mild grace, had stood
In her original self too confident,
Retained too long a countenance severe ;
A rock with torrents roaring, with the clouds
Familiar, and a favourite with the stars ;
But thou didst plant its crevices with flowers,
Hang it with shrubs, that twinkle in the breeze,
And teach the little birds to bu'ld their nests
And warble in its chambers."

After the death of their father, Dora Wordsworth had lived chiefly with her grandfather, so that since their childhood the brother and sister had not had their home together till now. Raisley Calvert, a friend whom Wordsworth had nursed in sickness, died, and left him a small legacy, and it was this which enabled him to take a little cottage at Racedown, near Crewkerne, in Dorsetshire, and to have his sister to live with him. From that time until her death she was his most faithful and devoted helper and companion.

She roused him from the despondency into which he had sunk after the failure of his expectations from the French Revolution :—

" She whispered still that brightness would return,
She in the midst of all preserved me still
A poet, made me seek beneath that name,
And that alone, my office upon earth."

Wordsworth now began his work. In the cottage at Racedown he wrote a poem, " Guilt and Sorrow;" a tragedy, *The Borderers*, and a description of a ruined cottage on a common, which now forms the opening of " The Excursion." At Netherstowey, near Racedown, there was living at that time another young poet, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, and the two soon became friends. Coleridge was the son of a clergyman in Devonshire. He had been educated at Christ's Hospital, and then at Jesus College, Cambridge. While at college he got into debt for a small

amount, and this so weighed upon his mind, that, without saying anything to his friends, he left Cambridge, went up to London, and enlisted in the Light Dragoons. It was found out before long where he was, and his family bought him off. Soon after his discharge, he met with Southey, another young poet, and a close intimacy sprang up between them. Southey was the son of a linendraper in Bristol. He was born in 1774, and was two years younger than Coleridge, and four years younger than Wordsworth. He had been educated by an uncle, who saw that he was a clever lad, and was sent first to Westminster School; but on account of an article he had written in the school magazine against flogging, which was then supposed to be the only means of maintaining authority over boys, he was compelled to leave. Full of indignation against all oppressors and tyrants, he went up to Oxford in 1792, and two years later he met with Coleridge. Both the young men sympathised keenly with the principles of the French Revolution, and, like Wordsworth, were full of hope in a glorious future for Europe; but when these hopes were over, they turned with disgust and despair from the Old World, and determined on founding a New World, on the banks of the Susquehanna in North America. It was to be a model colony; no kings, no priests, no servants, nor any form of tyranny. All were to be equal, each man working for the good of the community, while the women cooked and washed and scrubbed. As there were to be no servants, of course each man must have a wife; Coleridge went with his friend Southey to Bristol, and there they and another young man, Lovell, who had joined in the scheme, married three sisters of the name of Fricker. This was the only step ever taken towards realising their dream of the Pantisocracy, as they called their new model state. Funds were wanting to enable them to cross the Atlantic, and these were not forthcoming; happily for them and for the world they, like

Wordsworth, found that their true vocation was to be poetry. Coleridge settled in a cottage at Netherstowey; Southey, after a short residence in Lisbon with his uncle, began to study law in London.

In 1797 the Wordsworths moved from Racedown to Alfoxden, a house nearer to Netherstowey, and here Wordsworth and Coleridge planned to write together and publish a book of ballads. Coleridge was a student of German literature, and there was an influence at that time on English literature from Germany, which led to the production of ballads. In Germany the reaction against the French or classical influence had been as strong, and even more complete, than in England. A taste for their own national literature was roused, and the old Teutonic legends and ballads were brought to life. In England the love of romantic poetry was wakened by translations of German ballads; and Sir Walter Scott, of whom we shall speak more as a prose-writer, had put into English verse the German ballads of the "Spectre Bridegroom," and of the "Wild Huntsman." But while there was a charm about the wild stories of the genuine old Teutonic ballads, which expressed the real belief of their writers in the gloomy visions and supernatural terrors they narrated, it was impossible for a nineteenth century poet to write in the same good faith; and in England the imitations of the old Teutonic ballads were often only mocking burlesques.

Wordsworth and Coleridge saw that the essential poetry of a ballad does not consist in its mediæval colouring and old world story; in the days when the old ballads were written, they were credible stories of life at that time; and for the enjoyment of the real poetry of a ballad narrative, it was necessary that even the supernatural element in it should not appear to the imagination as grotesque and absurd. Wordsworth and Coleridge determined that their book of ballads, instead of being imitations of mediæval

legends, should be stories of simple life and feeling, written in the every-day language in which people naturally express their thoughts and feelings. The publication of the "Lyrical Ballads," as they called their book, marks the beginning of a great change in English literature. Although the French influence was passing away, and people were beginning to see that fine words, over-strained sentiments, and pictures of a far-off or wholly imaginary life, are not in themselves the *essentials* of poetry, still they had not yet learnt that poetry can do without these; and Wordsworth was the first writer with faith enough in the true elements of poetry, and with courage enough to risk his own personal fame, to give to the world as poems simple stories of beautiful and tender feeling, expressed in the same language in which we speak our thoughts, or tell our love, or joy, or sorrow, to those around us. It was, perhaps, natural that at first people, missing the ordinary trappings of poetry, did not recognise it at all, and cried out that this was not poetry, that the stories were childish, and the language prose; but as we come to look more into the very heart of things, and beneath the outside form which strikes the eye, and as we grow to love simple truth and nature above all forms of artificial life, we see the deep immortal poetry of Wordsworth's ballads in the thought which is the soul of each. If we take as an example one of the best known of the "Lyrical Ballads" (though it was not in the first edition), "We are Seven," we find that the simple story of the little cottage girl, who still counted the brother and sister whom God had taken to heaven as among the number of the living family, expresses the same deep truth as Tennyson's "In Memoriam." Even the child's love for her brother and sister, with whom she used to play, was the love of spirit for spirit, and she loves them still, and feels that they are living yet:—

"The love that rose on stronger wings,
Unpalsied when he met with Death,"

gives her the constant sense of their immortality; she sits beside their graves with her knitting or her work, and "sings a song to them," and nothing can convince her that there is any reason why the two in heaven should be left out of the number of the family, any more than the two at Conway, or the two who were gone to sea.

In other of the lyrical ballads, Wordsworth illustrates the oneness of Nature with man, and of both with God; the worth and dignity of each individual who lived a true life of love and duty; the depth and unselfishness of a mother's love. All these, and many other great truths and beautiful feelings, are wrapped up in the simplest narratives of homely life. The poem, "Peter Bell," written in 1798, the same year as the "Lyrical Ballads," though not published till 1819, was composed, Wordsworth tells us, "under a belief that the imagination not only does not require for its exercise the intervention of supernatural agency (as in the old German ballads and their imitations), but that though such agency be excluded, the faculty may be called forth as imperiously, and for kindred results of pleasure, by incidents, within the compass of poetic probability, in the humblest departments of daily life."

For some years Wordsworth's ballads were subjects for constant ridicule; parodies were written of them, one of the cleverest of which represents at its conclusion an old man wandering on a dark and dismal night among the graves in a churchyard. On the tombs are the names of the principal characters in Wordsworth's ballads, and last of all the old man comes to a gravestone with the inscription—

"W—— W——,
Never more will trouble you, trouble you."

But while the satire is now rare, and known only to book collectors, William Wordsworth's work lives on, for it has in it the truth, and therefore cannot be buried in the past.

The chief contribution of Coleridge to the volume of the "Lyrical Ballads" was the "Rime of the Ancient Mariner." This poem preserved more of the weird spirit of the old Teutonic ballads, but it expresses a truth which belongs to quite a later day. Both Wordsworth and Coleridge felt strongly how not only all mankind formed but one brotherhood, but how all creation belongs with man to the one great family of God. To break this harmony by needless cruelty, or by the destruction of animals, was a crime that destroyed the relation of the man who committed it to the universe around him; for by the spirit of love we are all bound together in closest dependence on one another.

Coleridge begins his story by telling how an Ancient Mariner stops a wedding guest and compels him to listen to the tale. He had sailed southward to the lonely region of ice and death around the southern pole, where no single living thing was seen; until at last an Albatross crossed the track of the ship. On that utterly desolate sea, the bird was hailed at once as the living companion and friend of the men upon the ship. The sailors loved the Albatross, and fed it every day; but the "Ancient Mariner," with a cold and selfish heart, raised his cross-bow, and, to gratify a cruel impulse, shot the harmless bird. He had broken the bond of love. The ship is becalmed, the sailors die of thirst, and he is left alone upon the ship in his selfish isolation. The curse remains upon him, until one moonlight night he sees the water-snakes—"God's creatures of the great calm"—which awhile before he had despised. And now—

> "Within the shadow of the ship
> I watched their rich attire;
> Blue, glossy green, and velvet black,
> They coiled and swam; and every track
> Was a flash of golden fire.

"O happy living things! no tongue
Their beauty might declare;
A spring of love gushed from my heart,
And I blessed them unaware."

Love had sprung up in his heart, and he is again one with Nature, and under the care of the same Father. That self-same moment he could pray, and angels again ministered to him. He was brought to shore in safety, and now he is compelled "to teach by his own example love and reverence to all things that God made and loveth."

"Farewell, farewell! but this I tell
To thee, thou wedding guest!
He prayeth well who loveth well
Both man and bird and beast.

"He prayeth best, who loveth best
All things both great and small;
For the dear God who loveth us,
He made and loveth all."

Soon after the publication of the "Lyrical Ballads," Wordsworth and his sister went to Germany, and spent a winter at Goslar, for the purpose of improving themselves in German, and of studying German literature. Whilst he was here, Wordsworth probably began to think of writing a great poem, though he did not put his ideas into execution till some years later. He had thought much of the experience he had passed through, and of how it had all worked together for good in the training and building up of his mind, and in teaching him the true principles of life. The process and stages of this inward growth he began to explain in a poem addressed to his friend Coleridge; but the opening lines only were written at Goslar.

On his return to England, Wordsworth took a small cottage at Grasmere, and in this cottage, or at Rydal Mount, a larger house in the same neighbourhood, he lived from

1800 to his death, in 1850. In 1802 he married Miss Mary Hutchinson, of Penrith, a lady whom he had long known and loved. Like his sister Dora, she thoroughly sympathised in the poet's work, and by her fine discrimination and taste was able to help him in the choice of expressions and phrases in his poems. Both she and Miss Wordsworth, by their good management and self-denial, enabled him to work steadily on in the path he believed to be the true one, although he received at first but little for his poems, for it took some time for the public generally to recover from that perversion of taste which had grown up under the French influence in regard to poetry. "Plain living and high thinking" was the principle which regulated the little household; and it is to that true devotion, which was not a mere sentiment, but an active life, in Mrs. and Miss Wordsworth, that the world owes the full, undisturbed development of Wordsworth's genius and work. Wordsworth's presence in the lake district drew others to it also. Southey took a house at Keswick, and lived there for many years, working hard and steadily at ballads and legends. Coleridge lived for a time with him there, but he suffered from ill-health and depression, which made him restless, and unable to bear long-sustained employment of the brain. In later years he gave up poetry, and wrote thoughtful essays and papers on religious and philosophic subjects.

Wordsworth did not bury himself among the lakes and mountains in order to lose sight of the world, and the life of it. He still felt intensely with all that concerned the progress of humanity; and faith in freedom was not lost by the failure of the French Revolution. During the years from 1802 to 1815 he wrote a series of sonnets and poems on National Independence and Liberty; but his praise of liberty is always associated with what it enables man to become and to do. It is not the empty desire for selfish action; the curse of oppression is—

> "That noble feelings, manly powers,
> Instead of gathering strength, must droop and pine."

And the sources of a free nation's glory are in "such faith and morals as Milton held"—

> "Patience and Temperance,
> Honour that knows the path, and will not swerve,
> Affections, which, if put to proof, are kind,
> And piety towards God."

Wordsworth, also, continued to write short narrative poems on the plan of the "Lyrical Ballads." These were suggested, for the most part, by stories from the simple life of the Westmoreland peasantry; but the story, which forms the picture of the poem, is only an illustration of some great truth of life, as in "We are Seven." His love of Nature and intense sympathy with her was a spring of poetic life in Wordsworth, and called forth many of his poems. Every natural object around him, the mountains, the clouds, the water falling in the noisy cataract or at rest in the calm lake, the little birds, the humblest flowers, daisies, celandine, and daffodils—each had power, like a touch upon a harp, to wake the poetry within him into a song.

In 1814 Wordsworth published "The Excursion." This was part of a great poem he had long been planning, which was to be called the "Recluse." In 1799 Coleridge had written to Wordsworth: "I wish you would write a poem adapted to those who, in consequence of the complete failure of the French Revolution, have thrown up all hopes of the amelioration of mankind, and are sinking into an almost epicurean selfishness." The purpose of Wordsworth's great poem was to teach the world that there was still hope in the future of mankind, for God still loved and ruled the world; and that there was work to be done by all, far wider and deeper, larger in its scope, and more minute in its details than the French Revolutionists ever conceived in

their finest theories—the work of caring for and raising each individual into his true life, so that the Divine ideal might be realised in all; and thus the dreams of the golden age become "a simple produce of the common day."

The plan of the whole work was to be this. In the poem Wordsworth had begun in Germany, he traces the process through which he arrived at the truths he teaches in the larger work, and this was to be "as a little ante-chapel," through which we enter to a church, and was to form an introduction. By this poem the mind was harmonised and prepared for the greater poem. This was not published till after Wordsworth's death, and was then named by Mrs. Wordsworth the "Prelude." The larger work, the "Recluse," to which the "Prelude" was the entrance, was to be the expression of thoughts on "Man, Nature, and Society," conclusions at which the far-seeing poet had arrived through experience and reflection. The first and third parts were to consist of "meditations in the author's own person." In the second, various characters were to be introduced as types, and the truths expressed through them. This part was called the "Excursion," and this was the only part of the poem which Wordsworth published. Wordsworth, like Milton, loved truth far more than fame, but he asked for "fit audience, though few;" and he may have felt that for his deeper thoughts and conclusions the world was altogether unripe.

The "Excursion" describes a walk of a few days, supposed to be taken by the poet, and in which he meets with various characters. The chief of these are the "Wanderer" (a pedlar), the "Solitary," and the "Pastor." The opening scene was written as a description of a ruined cottage on a common at Racedown. Here he meets the Wanderer, an old Scotch pedlar:—

> "Among the hills of Athol he was born;
> Where, in a small hereditary farm,

An unproductive slip of rugged ground,
His parents, with their numerous offspring, dwelt;
A virtuous household, though exceeding poor!
Pure livers were they all, austere and grave,
And fearing God; the very children taught
Stern self-respect, a reverence for God's word,
And an habitual piety, maintained
With strictness scarcely known on English ground."

The Pedlar had been brought up among the same influences of Nature as Wordsworth; he had tended cattle as a boy among the hills, and received the lessons Nature teaches. He had early learned also to reverence the written Word of God:—

"But in the mountains did he *feel* his faith.
All things (responsive to the writing) there
Breathed immortality, revolving life,
And greatness still revolving."

Books had their influence over him:—

"Among the hills
He gazed upon that mighty orb of song,
The divine Milton. Lore of different kind,
The annual savings of a toilsome life,
His schoolmaster supplied."

Thus nurtured by religion, Nature, and communion with the greatest minds, he became a pedlar, and added to his experience a knowledge of human nature and life.

"Much did he see of men,
Their manners, their enjoyments and pursuits,
Their passions and their feelings; chiefly those
Essential and eternal in the heart,
That 'mid the simpler forms of rural life,
Exist more simple in their elements,
And speak a plainer language.
* * * * *
"Hence it came,
That in our best experience he was rich,
And in the wisdom of our daily life."

The Wanderer's life had thus prepared him in every way to understand life and its true principles. When the Poet meets him on the common, he has given up his trade, but he still loves to wander over the old roads and wild paths, and to visit the scenes and friends he has known in earlier years. He remembers the last inhabitant of the ruined cottage, and as he and the poet sit under the shade of the trees, he tells her story. She was the happy, loving wife of a weaver; but her husband fell ill, and on his recovery, the introduction of machinery had thrown the handloom weavers out of work. In vain he sought some employment He grew bitter and despairing. At last he left his home, and his wife had a letter to say that he had enlisted as a soldier in a troop going to a distant land. From that time she never heard of him again. She managed to keep herself and her two little ones from actual starvation by spinning hemp; but her heart was with her husband, and daily she looked and watched for his return. She lost her two children, and she was left alone. For nine years she "lingered in unquiet widowhood," uncertain of her husband's fate, hoping and questioning every passer-by, and still hearing no tidings of him. The cottage, meanwhile, was fast falling into decay, and the garden, once so neat, was left to wild disorder. Still hoping and watching to the last, here she died. It was a story of joy ending in sorrow, of hope never fulfilled on earth, and followed only by bitter disappointment. It seemed to the Poet at first to be but a mockery of life, a wasted existence; then the Wanderer speaks the words which cast the gleam of light across the darkness:—

> "My Friend! enough to sorrow you have given,
> The purposes of wisdom ask no more;
> Nor more would she have craved as due to one
> Who, in her worst distress, had ofttimes felt
> The unbounded might of prayer; and learned, with soul
> Fixed on the Cross, that consolation springs

From sources deeper far than deepest pain
For the meek sufferer. Why, then, should we read
The *forms* of things with an unworthy eye?
She sleeps in the calm earth, and peace is here.
I well remember that those very plumes,
Those weeds, and the high spear-grass on that wall,
By mist and silent raindrops silver'd o'er,
As once I passed, into my heart conveyed
So still an image of tranquillity,
So calm and still, and looked so beautiful
Amid the uneasy thoughts which filled my mind,
That what we feel of sorrow and despair
From ruin and from change, and all the grief
That passing *shows* of Being leave behind,
Appeared an idle dream, that could maintain
Nowhere dominion o'er the enlightened spirit
Whose meditative sympathies repose
Upon the breast of Faith."

This closes the first book of the "Excursion;" the second book is called the "Solitary." The next day the Wanderer and the Poet continue their walk, and the scene is now changed from Somersetshire to Westmoreland. They pass up Langdale Valley, and from the western side look down upon Blea Tarn. By the tarn stands a solitary house; this is the abode of the character called the Solitary. On their road the Wanderer tells the Recluse the story of the solitary. He had been chaplain to a Highland troop, but lived gaily, less as a pastor than a soldier. Then he married a lady—lovely, intelligent, good, and rich; and they led together a life of perfect earthly happiness for a season. But death came, and in one year he lost his wife and two children. Like the poor woman in the ruined cottage, the Solitary stood bereft of all that makes life dear. But for him there was for a while the larger interest in the world, which called him out of his individual grief and disappointment in life. This, and not faith, helped him to begin life anew:—

"The glorious opening, the unlooked-for dawn,
That promised everlasting joy to France,
Her voice of social transport reached even him;
He broke from his contracted bounds, repaired
To the great city, an emporium then
Of golden expectations, and receiving
Freights, every day, from a new world of hope;
Thither his popular talents he transferred;
And, from the pulpit, zealously maintained
The cause of Christ and civil liberty
As one, and moving to one glorious end.
A happy service; for he was sincere,
As vanity and fondness for applause,
And new and shapeless wishes, would allow."

Then came the failure and disappointment of all his hopes in the "everlasting joy of France," as in his own hope of individual joy in earthly things; and the Solitary, "after a wandering course of discontent"—

"Fixed his home,
Or, rather say, sat down by very chance,
Among these rugged hills; where now he dwells,
And wastes the sad remainder of his hours,
Steeped in a self-indulging spleen, that wants not
Its own voluptuousness; on this resolved,
With this content, that he will live and die
Forgotten,—at safe distance from a world
Not moving to his mind."

As the Wanderer and the Recluse approach the house, they meet a funeral, and listen to the history of a poor pauper, who had passed through the bitterest trials of want, neglect, and unkindness; and they hear the voices of those who bear him to the churchyard singing, "Shall in the grave Thy love be known, in death Thy faithfulness." Then, as they pass on, they find a little child's building of stones and moss and bits of earthenware, and forming one side of it was a book, swollen by the rain, a volume of Voltaire's, belonging to the Solitary; who, flying from a

world he despaired of, had brought no other relic of it than "this dull product of a scoffer's pen." But the natural feeling of the human heart is stronger than all artificial and mocking philosophies; the Solitary is found consoling a little child, who weeps for the old pauper they are carrying to the grave:—

> "'They to the grave
> Are bearing him, my little one,' he said—
> 'To the dark pit; but he will feel no pain;
> His body is at rest, his soul in heaven.'"

The third book of the "Excursion" is called "Despondency," and it describes the state of the Solitary's mind; a man who, having rested on things which had crumbled to pieces and passed away, has sunk into the weariness and sickness of despair.

The fourth book, "Despondency Corrected," is the Wanderer's answer again to the false conclusion that life is a mockery, because it is not ordered according to our expectations or desires:—

> "The Wanderer said, 'One adequate support
> For the calamities of mortal life
> Exists—one only; an assured belief
> That the procession of our fate, howe'er
> Sad or disturbed, is ordered by a Being
> Of infinite benevolence and power;
> Whose everlasting purposes embrace
> All accidents, converting them to good.
> The darts of anguish *fix* not where the seat
> Of suffering hath been strongly fortified
> By acquiescence in the Will supreme
> For time and for eternity; by Faith,
> Faith absolute in God, including hope,
> And the defence that lies in boundless love
> Of His perfections; with habitual dread
> Of aught unworthily conceived, endured
> Impatiently, ill-done, or left undone,
> To the dishonour of His holy Name.

Soul of our souls, and Safeguard of the world!
Sustain, Thou only canst, the sick of heart!
Restore their languid spirits, and recall
Their lost affections unto Thee and Thine.'"

These thoughts are worked out through the book; and in the fifth book, the Recluse, the Solitary, and the Wanderer leave the house, and, crossing over a low ridge, descend into little Langdale valley. They come to a churchyard, which Wordsworth has placed here, but which is really that of the church at Grasmere; and whilst sitting under the trees they are joined by the "Pastor," who gives the name to the fifth book. The Pastor is actively striving, by the constant care of his flock, to leave his little bit of the world better than he found it. Life, he says, is not the accomplishment of our own plans and desires:—

"Life, I repeat, is energy of Love,
Divine or human, exercised in pain,
In strife and tribulation, and ordained,
If so approved and sanctified, to pass,
Through shades and silent rest, to endless joy."

In the sixth and seventh books the Pastor illustrates his faith in God's rule of life by histories of some of his people who are now lying at rest in the churchyard around them. These books are called "The Churchyard among the Mountains." The eighth book is the "Parsonage," where the Pastor takes the travellers to his home, and introduces them to his wife and children; and the Solitary sees that all happiness did not leave the earth when he lost the source of his own. In the last book the whole of the characters in the poem, the Recluse, the Wanderer, the Solitary, and the Pastor, stand on Loughrigg Fell, and looking over the valley, lakes, and surrounding mountains, the Pastor speaks the hope of the world's constant and sure advance He reminds his companions that notwithstanding the bloodshed and misery on the earth, we have passed from a state so barbarous and

cruel, that our present advance may, by comparison, appear even as though "Paradise, the lost abode of man, was raised again;" and then he asks:—

> "Whence but from Thee, the true and only God,
> And from the faith derived through Him who bled
> Upon the cross, this marvellous advance
> Of good from evil; as if one extreme
> Were left, the other gained?"

And in full confidence in the further onward progress, he prays:—

> "Let Thy word prevail.
> Oh, let Thy word prevail to take away
> The sting of human nature. Spread the law
> As it is written in Thy holy Book
> Throughout all lands; let every nation hear
> The high behest, and every heart obey;
> Both for the love of purity, and hope
> Which it affords to such as do Thy will,
> And persevere in good, that they shall rise
> To have a nearer view of Thee in Heaven;
> Then, nor till then, shall persecution cease,
> And cruel wars expire. The way is marked,
> The guide appointed, and the ransom paid."

Wordsworth, like Milton, had hoped much from the setting up on earth of an ideal state; like Milton, he learned that the ideal must be realised in each individual before the state could become regenerate. Milton wrote:—

> "The law of faith,
> Working through love, upon their hearts shall write,
> To guide them in all truth."
> * * * * *
> "Thus they win
> Great numbers of each nation to receive
> With joy the tidings brought from Heaven."

Wordsworth:—

> "The law of faith
> Working through love, such conquest shall it gain,

Such triumph over sin and guilt achieve,
And with that help the Wonder shall be seen
Fulfilled, the Hope accomplished."

Both poets saw that the triumph of good must come out of great tribulation and trial of faith and obedience. Milton says:—

"Good with bad
Expect to hear, supernal grace contending
With sinfulness of man, thereby to learn
True patience, and to temper joy with fear."

Wordsworth says:—

"For if faith were left untried,
How could the might that lurks within her, then,
Be shown? Her glorious excellence (that ranks
Among the first of powers and virtues) proved?"

Meantime, Milton and Wordsworth, two of the greatest minds best able to conceive the vision of an ideal state, through the larger power of their imagination, and to represent it to the world by the skill of their poetic art, both rest on the individual performance of duty in daily life as the only true realisation of the ideal. Milton:—

"Be lowly wise;
Think only what concerns thee and thy being.
* * * * * *
"To know
That which before us lies in daily life
Is the prime wisdom."

Wordsworth:—

"Wisdom is ofttimes nearer when we stoop
Than when we soar. * * *
In our best experience he was rich,
And in the wisdom of our daily life."

In 1850, with the first half of the nineteenth century, Wordsworth ended his great, calm life; but the result of his work in gathering the shattered truths which were in the

French Revolution, in showing that God still loves and rules this world, that life is still precious and unspeakably worth living, that the glorious hopes for the world are not lost, but are being accomplished every day in each true worker for his own best elevation and that of others—all this endures, and is the living soul of the present day, giving immortal life to all its best work of every kind. And although some gloomy clouds of unbelief and doubt may darken a little of the clear heaven, other poets, later than Wordsworth, whose names are scarcely yet written in the past history of English literature, worked with Wordsworth in this steadfast faith.

We now come to the great figure of the Wizard of the North, who holds a high place both among poets and prose writers. Though not so great a poet as William Wordsworth, he was an equally true one, and English prose fiction owes an immense debt to his influence.

Walter Scott was born, in Edinburgh, on the same day as Napoleon I., the 15th of August, 1771. Like Lord Byron, he was lame, but instead of allowing this misfortune to embitter his life, he shared as far as possible in the sports of his companions, and filled all the rest of the time by reading every book on which he could lay his hands, especially old ballads, chronicles, and legends of the past. At twelve years old he read Percy's "Reliques of Ancient Poetry," which encouraged the bent of his mind towards mediæval romance. He was brought up as a lawyer, and called in 1792 to the Scottish bar, and, in intervals of practising his profession, translated German ballads, and afterwards edited "The Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border," a book which one of the critics of the day said "contained the elements of a hundred historical romances." In 1805 he published "The Lay of the Last Minstrel," which at once established his fame, and was the first of his well-known series of romantic poems; "Marmion" followed in 1808; "The Lady of the

Lake," in 1810; "Rokeby," in 1812; "The Lord of the Isles," in 1815. He partly set and partly followed the fashion of these romances in verse, and, in the title of the first, he links these to the great metrical romances of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. "The Lay of the Last Minstrel" was directly suggested by the lays of those earlier singers which had really been sung and recited in camp and court five hundred years before. The stories as told by Walter Scott are extremely interesting, the characters distinct and spirited, the atmosphere pure and bracing as that of the heathery hills to which they introduced so many southern readers, while the verse has a glorious swing and rhythm. In "The Lay of the Last Minstrel" we get the famous lines:—

"Breathes there the man with soul so dead,
Who never to himself hath said,
This is my own, my native land!
Whose heart has ne'er within him burned,
As home his footsteps he hath turned,
From wandering on a foreign strand!
If such there breathe, go, mark him well;
For him no minstrel raptures swell;
High though his titles, proud his name,
Boundless his wealth as wish can claim;
Despite those titles, power and pelf,
The wretch, concentred all in self,
Living, shall forfeit fair renown,
And, doubly dying, shall go down
To the vile dust, from whence he sprung,
Unwept, unhonoured, and unsung."

The story of Marmion is much more exciting and the description of the battle of Flodden very fine. It contains many instances, too, of Scott's characteristic power of using *names* to give flow and swing to his verses.

"They hailed Lord Marmion
They hailed him Lord of Fontenaye
Of Lutterward, and Scrivelbaye,
Of Tamworth tower and town."

"The Lady of the Lake" has been, perhaps, the best loved of all the poems. It has given the joy of the vales and the mountains, and showed the charm of moor and fell to several generations. The Harp of the North has indeed been an enchantress. The Gathering, the Battle, the Combat in the glen, are masterpieces of spirited and graceful verses. "The Lord of the Isles" and "Rokeby" were not at the time so successful as the three first poems, nor have they ever been so popular, though they have much of the same charm.

But it is in the ballads and songs scattered through the narrative poems and novels that Scott showed himself more truly as a poet.

These are not so much imitations of the old Scottish song writers as new instances of the same inspiration. "Young Lochinvar" and "Alan-a-Dale" are in their way unequalled, and "Proud Maisie," "County Guy," "In the Lost Battle," and many others, can never go out of date.

PROUD MAISIE.

Proud Maisie is in the wood,
Walking so early;
Sweet Robin sits on the bush,
Singing so rarely.

"Tell me thou bonny bird,
When shall I marry me?"
"When six braw gentlemen
Kirkward shall carry ye."

"Who makes the bridal bed,
Birdie, say truly?"
"The grey headed sexton
That delves the grave duly.

"The glowworm o'er grave and stone
Shall light thee steady;
The owl from the steeple sing
Welcome, proud lady."

CHAPTER XXIII.

VICTORIAN PROSE.

When the popularity of the poems began a little to wane, Walter Scott started the long series of prose novels which were destined almost to eclipse his earlier efforts. "Waverley, or 'Tis Sixty Years Since," was published anonymously in 1814, and the secret of its authorship was the great excitement of literary circles, though it now seems wonderful that there should have been any doubt on the matter.

"Waverley" is a tale of "the '45," and has excited Jacobite sympathies in many a youth and maiden. It is, however, interesting to note how careful the author is not to identify himself with the lost cause; after only sixty years it was necessary to show himself clearly as a loyal subject of the house of Hanover. And, indeed, Scott is never carried away in any of his novels by romantic enthusiasm. His chivalrous heroes have all to justify themselves at the bar of common-sense. He is almost as impartial as Shakespeare, though he does not go nearly so deep into the springs of action. The sketch of the Highland Jacobite chieftain, Fergus MacIvor, is an admirable specimen of his manner. In our youth, Fergus seemed an ideal hero, so vividly are his attractive qualities and his self-devotion described. But his faults are never condoned, his follies never palliated, and we see that it is well that he was beaten. Although the author of "Waverley" did so much to popularise the chivalry, the splendour and the pomp of the Middle Ages, it

is not true that he hid their darker side; on the contrary, he draws the moral in a way that sometimes falls a little flat on modern readers.

He rescued romance for morality, and opened its pages to the young and innocent. His young heroes may seem shadowy, but they are all good, their lives are pure and their careers honourable, and thus he gave to girls and boys the splendid gallery of historical characters by which his name is famous. Richard Cœur de Lion, Louis XI. of France, Queen Elizabeth, Mary Queen of Scots, James the First, Charles the Second, Prince Charles Edward—not forgetting the glimpse of him in "Redgauntlet"—and many another; his descriptions of old Scottish manners and his humorous characters, such as Friar Tuck, Dandie Dinmont, Bailie Nicol Jarvie, none of whom can ever be forgotten.

He described scenery, as in poetry so in prose, with delightful clearness and truth. Among the many novels "The Antiquary," which in its own day was a story of modern life, has been thought to contain the best character painting; Jeanie Deans in "The Heart of Midlothian" certainly rises to the highest moral level of any of his characters; perhaps "Ivanhoe" is the most charming as a chivalrous romance. Some critics think very highly of the "Monastery" on account of its dealing with the supernatural in the White Lady of Avenel. All the tales contain long tracts of excellent writing which do not advance the story, they open slowly and have unexciting chapters. Nevertheless, they contain noble joys for those who seek them.

Sir Walter Scott won much fame and money, but he did not manage the latter well. His house at Abbotsford cost a great deal, and his affairs became involved with those of his publishers. The firm failed, and the story of the brave fight made by Sir Walter to pay the debts in full should be read in the pages of Lockhart's Life of Sir Walter Scott, itself a classic, and in his letters and journal published more

recently. There we find that the author of "Waverley" never described so noble a character as himself. Romance is outdone by reality. He died in 1832 after a long period of failing power. Our generation owes much of its pleasure in mountain scenery, in the humours of peasant life, in the company of animals and in chivalrous romance, to the writings and example of Sir Walter Scott.

Another writer of almost equal if of different fame reveals to us a world entirely uninfluenced by the ideals with which Sir Walter Scott was delighting her generation—Jane Austen was born in a well-to-do country parsonage at Steventon in 1775. She was one of a large family, a pretty and charming girl, fond of balls and fine needlework and becoming dresses. She wrote six novels in all, which deal entirely with the life of country towns and country houses, and visits to Bath, with occasional glimpses of London as seen by a young lady in the earlier years of the nineteenth century. There is some enthusiasm for the navy, much sympathy for sailors, but with this exception there is no allusion to the great public events of the day, and the new influences in art and literature are almost unknown; a little gentle fun is sometimes poked at them. The point of view is exactly given by the model hero in "Sense and Sensibility." He likes "rich meadows and neat farm houses; rocks and promontories, grey moors and brushwood, are all lost on me." He is "not fond of nettles, or thistles, or *heath blossoms.*" To be sure, he is making fun of the sentimental girl, but she makes no objection to the grouping of nettles and heather. It has been well said that the world was never quite so commonplace as Miss Austen makes it, and yet those six tales of commonplace life, and, on the whole, of commonplace people, stand alone in literature. They are never dull, they never cease to be alive, they never strike a false note. The good young clergymen who have abundant time to call on the young ladies and attend

balls and dinner parties, the girls who think and talk of very little else than the young men, live and breathe for us still. We still laugh at the humorous characters such as Mr. Collins and Miss Bates. There are still Harriet Smiths in existence, capable of preserving the lead pencils used by the objects of their admiration. Very few heroines so true to life as Elizabeth Bennet have come to drive her from the field, and though the proceedings of the Bennet family would now be impossible in the same station of life, they themselves can never be obsolete. Miss Austen shows us a leisurely, cheerful world, with a great deal of easy gaiety and no public duties.

When the heroines' relations are uncongenial they accept the fact with little distress, and behave perfectly well to them. Their hearts beat true behind their formal speech. Mr. Knightley was not really a dull lover. Catherine Morland is that nearly impossible character, a true *ingénue.* Her innocence is the real thing. The foolish, undisciplined Marianne Dashwood is a good girl and a lady, and Emma is a delightful young woman, though she does some things which would be impossible to her great-granddaughters.

In Anne Elliot we seem to see the growth of a new ideal leading the way to the deeper conceptions of modern fiction, to characters more deeply conceived, indeed, but never, perhaps, so perfectly carried out.

Jane Austen died in 1817. "Sense and Sensibility" was written in 1811, "Pride and Prejudice" in 1813, "Mansfield Park" in 1814, "Emma" in 1816. "Northanger Abbey" was the first written but did not see the light till after her death in 1818, in company with "Persuasion." Critics still contend as to the respective merits of these tales. None of them can be read too often or known too well.

Miss Ferrier was born in 1782, and outlived Miss Austen for many years. Her three novels, "Marriage," "The In-

heritance," and "Destiny," contain broader farce and more thrilling romance, and cover a wider field of life than those of her contemporaries. The fun is immortal, but the sentiment is of another day than ours and we cannot agree with it.

Maria Edgeworth deserves more space than we have to give her. Walter Scott paid her the great compliment of saying that her Irish tales suggested his treatment of the Scottish peasantry. As a writer for the young she is a standing proof that "tales with a purpose" need not be dull. "Helen" was perhaps her best novel, and "L'Amie Inconnue" the cleverest of her many tales. "The Parent's Assistant" contained "Rosamond," "Frank and Lucy," "The Little Merchant," and other stories dear to our grandmothers, and not to be despised in the twentieth century. They are remarkable for an entire absence of folly. She was born in 1776, and died in 1849.

One great master of style is much more talked of than read. Most people know that De Quincey was the friend of Wordsworth and Coleridge, that he took opium, and wrote beautiful English. He was born in 1785 of wealthy parents in Manchester, and wrote "The Confessions of an Opium Eater" in 1821. In this he describes the lovely and dreadful visions with which he was haunted. He wrote many essays, critical and otherwise. One paper of his describes in a way never to be forgotten the journey of the mail coaches which, decked with laurels, dashed through the country and left the news of victory as they went along. He lived for some time after he ceased writing, and died at Edinburgh in 1859, having entirely passed out of touch with old friends and acquaintances.

THE ENGLISH MAIL COACH GOING DOWN WITH VICTORY.

FROM eight p.m. to fifteen or twenty minutes past imagine the mails assembled on parade in Lombard Street, where, at

that time, and not in St. Martin's-le-Grand, was seated the General Post Office. In what exact strength we mustered I do not remember, but from the length of each separate *atelage* we filled the street, though a long one, and though we were drawn up in double file. On any night the spectacle was beautiful. The absolute perfection of all the appointments about the carriage and the harness, their strength, their brilliant cleanliness, their beautiful simplicity, but more than all the royal magnificence of the horses—were what might first have fixed the attention. Every carriage in every morning of the year, was taken down to an official inspector for examination—wheels, axles, linch-pins, poles, glasses, lamps, were all critically probed and tested. Every part of every carriage had been cleaned, every horse had been groomed, with as much vigour as if they belonged to a private gentleman ; and that part of the spectacle offered itself always. But the sight before us is a sight of victory ; and behold ! to the ordinary display, what a heart-shaking addition !—horses, men, carriages, are all dressed in laurels and flowers, oak leaves and ribbons. The guards, as being officially His Majesty's servants, and of the coachmen such as are within the privilege of the post office, wear the Royal liveries, of course, and, as it is summer (for all the land victories were naturally won in Summer) they wear on this fine evening their liveries exposed to view, without any covering of upper coats. Such a costume, and the elaborate arrangement of laurels in their hats, dilate their hearts, by giving to them openly a personal connection with the great news, in which already they have the general interest of patriotism. That great national sentiment surmounts and quells all sense of ordinary distinctions. Those passengers who happen to be gentlemen are now hardly to be distinguished as such except by dress ; for the usual reserve of their manner in speaking to the attendants has on this night melted away. One heart, one pride, one

glory, connect every man by the transcendent bond of his national blood.

The spectators, who are numerous beyond precedent, express their sympathy with these fervent feelings by continued hurrahs. Every moment are shouted aloud by the post office servants, and summoned to draw up, the great ancestral names of cities known to history through a thousand years —Lincoln, Winchester, Portsmouth, Gloucester, Oxford, Bristol, Manchester, York, Newcastle, Edinburgh, Perth, Stirling, Aberdeen,—expressing the grandeur of the Empire by the antiquity of its towns, and the grandeur of the mail establishment by the diffusive radiation of its separate missions. Every moment you hear the thunder of the lids locked down upon the mail bags. That sound to each individual mail is the signal for drawing off, which process is the finest part of the whole spectacle. Then come the horses into play. Horses! can these be horses that bound off with the action and gestures of leopards? What stir!—what sea-like ferment! what a thundering of wheels! what a trampling of hoofs! what a sounding of trumpets! what farewell cheers!—what redoubling peals of brotherly congratulation connecting the name of the particular mail—"Liverpool for ever!" with the name of the particular victory, "Badajoz for ever!" or "Salamanca for ever!" The half slumbering consciousness that, all night long and all the next day—perhaps for even a longer period—many of these mails, like fire racing along a train of gunpowder, will be kindling at every instant new successions of burning joy, has an obscure effect of multiplying the victory itself by multiplying to the imagination into infinity the stages of its progressive diffusion. A fiery arrow seems to be let loose, which from this moment is destined to travel without intermission westwards for three hundred miles—northwards for six hundred; and the sympathy of our Lombard Street friends at parting is exalted a hundredfold by a sort of

visionary sympathy with the yet slumbering sympathies which in so vast a succession we are going to awake.

De Quincey.

A telegram and a placard is a much less picturesque way of conveying news from the seat of war; but we all know something of the feelings which are here so beautifully described, and are linked by them to a wider Empire than was dreamed of in De Quincey's day.

Charles Lamb is one of the best known, and, we may add, the best loved of the writers of the early nineteenth century. It is not possible to think of his writing, apart from himself, for his unique, charming, and pathetic personality appears in every line of them, and his history is perhaps better known than his works. His much loved sister Mary, in a sudden attack of insanity killed her mother, and through all her life was subject to recurring attacks of weakness. She was allowed to live with her brother, who undertook to take charge of her, and used to take her to the asylum when signs of the dreadful complaint showed themselves. This great tragedy, this life-long self-devotion is well known, but no one can ever know the daily anxiety, the daily self-denial which it involved. Lamb's best known work is "The Essays of Elia," which are masterpieces of style, and full of humour and pathos. These were originally contributed to various periodicals. In 1808, he published "Specimens of English Dramatic Poets," who lived about the time of Shakspere, with notes, and there is no book so well calculated to give an idea of these great writers to anyone who has no access to the originals. Together with his sister he wrote "Tales from Shakspere," for children, and he contributed one or two of the tales to Mary Lamb's delightful children's book, "Mrs. Leicester's School." He never married, in spite of an early love story, giving up his whole life for eight and thirty years to the care of his sister.

He was a clerk in the India House, and he loved London very much, and was not happy out of it. He had a genius for friendship, and was the friend of Coleridge, Southey, Wordsworth, Rogers, and many others, and all the traditions regarding him are genial, kindly, and tender.

One of his sayings, when once heard, dwells in the memory. There was a discussion, apparently as to the Divinity of Christ—which some of the party perhaps contested.

"Yes," said Lamb, "if Shakspere came into the room we should all stand; but if Christ came in we should all kneel!"

Charles Lamb was born in 1775, and educated at Christ's Hospital. He died in 1834.

Thomas Babington Macaulay was born in 1800 at Clapham; his father, Zachary Macaulay, was one of the dauntless little band who freed England from the reproach of the slave trade. Stories were told of his precocious childhood—how once when Hannah More came to call upon his parents, who were out, the small boy went in to entertain her, and offered to get her "a glass of old spirits for her refreshment"; and how, when his nurse had moved a stone set between his own and his brother's garden, he stood up and said, "Cursed be Sally, for it is written, 'Cursed is he that removeth his neighbour's land-mark!'" He had an extraordinary memory, and as he grew to manhood he succeeded in almost everything he undertook; once, indeed, he was defeated in an election at Edinburgh, but he took this as a monition to devote himself more fully to literature, in which he had already made his mark. He had invented a style of his own, which has since been imitated, but which bore the mark of absolute novelty when he introduced it. It is perhaps seen at its most brilliant in his essays, though the five volumes of his history give many fine examples of it. The following is taken from the "Essay on Clive":—

"The Nabobs soon became a most unpopular class of men. Some of them had in the East displayed eminent talents, and rendered great services to the State; but at home their talents were not shown to advantage, and their services were little known. That they had sprung from obscurity, that they had acquired great wealth, that they exhibited it insolently, that they spent it extravagantly, that they raised the price of everything in their neighbourhood, from fresh eggs to rotten boroughs, that their coaches were finer than that of the Lord Mayor, that the examples of their large and ill-governed households corrupted half the servants in the country, that some of them, for all their magnificence, could not catch the tone of good society, but in spite of the stud and the crowd of menials, of the plate and Dresden china, of the venison and of the Burgundy, were still low men; these were things which excited, both in the class from which they had sprung and in the class into which they endeavoured to force themselves, the bitter aversion which is the effect of mingled anger and contempt. But when it was also rumoured that the fortune which had enabled its possessor to eclipse the Lord Lieutenant on the race-ground, or to carry the county against the head of a house as old as Domesday Book, had been accumulated by violating public faith, by deposing legitimate princes, by reducing whole provinces to beggary, all the higher and better, as well as the low and evil, parts of human nature were stirred against the wretch who had obtained by guilt and dishonour the riches which he now lavished with arrogant and inelegant profusion. If any of our readers will take the trouble to search in the dusty recesses of circulating libraries for some novel published sixty years ago, the chance is that the villain or sub-villain of the story will prove to be a savage old Nabob, with an immense fortune, a tawny complexion, a bad liver, and a worse heart."

Macaulay's mind was brilliant, but not deep. When he was Governor-General of India, and had to organise Indian education, he could conceive nothing better to give to India than the education suitable to English boys—a mistake which is only gradually being remedied. Within certain homely limits of thought, however, he was admirable. Take the "Lays of Ancient Rome" and "Ivry"; has anyone better expressed the elementary idea of patriotism than in his

> "How can man die better
> Than facing fearful odds,
> For the ashes of his fathers
> And the temples of his gods," &c. ?

Or of civic freedom than in Icilius's speech :—

> "Now by your children's cradles, now by your fathers' graves,
> Be men to-day, Quirites, or be for ever slaves!"

In the "Armada" and the passage at the beginning of "Horatius" describing the gathering of the Etruscan clans, he shows a mastery of proper names quite equal to Scott's; and the leap of Horatius into the Tiber, familiar as it is, has the power still to make the audience hold its breath till he is safely hauled ashore.

Possibly he might have had qualities in his nature, however, which never fully came out, for there is one, "Epitaph on a Jacobite," the political party upon which he usually pours all the vials of his scorn, as tender and pathetic as anything in the English language.

> "To my true king I offered, free from stain,
> Courage and faith—vain faith, and courage vain.
> For him, I threw lands, honours, wealth, away,
> And one dear hope that was more prized than they.
> For him I languished in a foreign clime,
> Grey-haired with sorrow in my manhood's prime;

Heard on Lavernia Scargill's whispering trees,
And pined by Arno for my lovelier Tees;
Beheld each night my home in fevered sleep,
Each morning started from the dream to weep;
Till God, who saw me tried too sorely, gave
The resting-place I asked, an early grave.
Oh thou, whom chance leads to this nameless stone,
From that proud country which was once my own,
By those white cliffs I never more must see,
By that dear language which I spake like thee,
Forgive all feuds, and shed one English tear
O'er English dust. A broken heart lies here."

Thomas Carlyle was born of a Scottish peasant family at Ecclefechan in Ayrshire. The Carlyles were strong, rough, worthy working people; the father was first a mason and then a small farmer, whose religion, real in its way, was narrow and gloomy. One of the merits of Scotland is that the working people have a great respect for learning, and will make great sacrifices to gain it; and when Thomas was fourteen years old he walked all the way to Edinburgh to enter the University there. As he grew up to manhood he could not believe the narrow Calvinist views in which he had been brought up, and for some time he was on the verge of disbelieving everything. In the year 1821, however, he perceived that to disbelieve everything was not the way to set right what was wrong in the world, and, as he said himself, "Cast out the spirit of negation for indignation and grim fire-eyed defiance." This spirit doubtless enabled him to fire telling shots at what was bad in the world around him, but it did not show him how to construct what was better; and it chimed in too well with his natural temperament, caused by chronic ill-health, which made him look on the dark side of almost everyone he met.

In 1822 he fell in love with a very bright and clever young lady named Jane Welsh, whom in 1826 he married. She greatly admired his genius, and accepted his word when

he said he intended to stick to literature, even though it did not pay him well, rather than to make an easier living in some other way. But she did not realise that he thought that a woman ought to be satisfied with the dull and rough life his mother and sisters led, and he did not realise that she, a delicately-brought-up girl with sensitive nerves, was not fit for a hard life in a lonely cottage. Both of them had sharp tempers and sharp tongues, and though both loved each other at bottom, they had many differences. This, however, is the case with many husbands and wives, and it was unfortunate that after Carlyle and his wife were both dead his friend Froude thought he was acting according to Carlyle's wishes in publishing to the world journals relating their domestic differences, while he seems to have left out the parts which spoke of their mutual affection. There is no doubt that Carlyle was broken-hearted at his wife's death in 1866.

In 1834 the couple came to live at Cheyne Row, Chelsea, where Carlyle devoted himself to his work. His health, however, made him very sensitive to noises, and one of his tasks was to construct himself a sound-proof room in which to write. "Sartor Resartus" and "On Heroes" were among his earlier works, but the greatest, though not the longest of his writings, is his book on the "French Revolution," finished in 1837. His "Life and Letters of Cromwell" followed in 1845, and his volumes on "Frederick the Great" came out from 1858 to 1865.

Carlyle's style is his own. It cannot be called musical, but it is extraordinarily strong, powerful and vivid, and seems to reflect the nature of the strong rough Scotch peasant stock of which he came. His early books have it in a far less marked degree than his later ones. "Frederick" may almost be said to be written in another language than English. But anyone who will read enough of him to get over the roughness of his style will find his work very

repaying to read. Page after page is strong, brilliant, and made to hold its place in the memory. The writer turned over the pages of the "French Revolution" to find a suitable passage for quotation, and found it such a mine of riches that on almost every page there was a paragraph that might have been chosen.

The following describes the beginning of the fall of Robespierre. (Book vi., ch. 7.) The Convention is sitting, and Tallien comes in.

"Saint Just is verily reading that report of his; green Vengeance, in the shape of Robespierre watching nigh. Behold, however, Saint Just has read but few sentences, when interruption rises, rapid *crescendo;* when Tallien starts to his feet, and Billaud, and this man starts and that, and Tallien, a second time, with his: 'Citoyens, at the Jacobins last night I trembled for the Republic. I said to myself, if the Convention dare not strike the Tyrant, then I myself dare; and with this I will do it, if need be,' said he whisking out a clear-gleaming Dagger, and brandishing it there; the Steel of Brutus, as we call it. Whereat we all do bellow, and brandish, impetuous acclaim. 'Tyranny! Dictatorship! Triumvirate!' And the Select Committeemen accuse, and all men accuse, and uproar, and impetuously acclaim. And Saint Just is standing motionless, pale of face; Couthon ejaculating, 'Triumvir?' with a look at his paralytic legs. And Robespierre is struggling to speak, but President Thuriot is jingling the bell against him, but the Hall is sounding against him like an Æolus-Hall; and Robespierre is mounting the Tribune-steps and descending again; going and coming, like to choke with rage, terror, desperation; and mutiny is the order of the day! '. . . President of Assassins,' shrieks Robespierre, 'I demand speech of thee for the last time!' It cannot be had. 'To you, O virtuous men of the Plain,' cries he, finding audience one moment, 'I appeal to you!' The virtuous men of the

Plain sit silent as stones. And Thuriot's bell jingles, and the Hall sounds like Æolus's Hall. Robespierre's frothing lips are grown 'blue,' his tongue dry, cleaving to the roof of his mouth. 'The blood of Danton chokes him,' cry they. 'Accusation! Decree of Accusation!' Thuriot swiftly puts that question. Accusation passes; the incorruptible Maximilien is decreed Accused."

Here is another passage, describing the national preparations for war in 1793:—

"Do not bells transmute themselves into cannon; iron stanchions into the white weapon (*arme blanche*) by sword cutlery? The wheels of Langres scream, amid their sputtering fire-hate; grinding mere swords. The smithies of Charleville ring with gun-making. What say we, Charleville? Two hundred and fifty-eight forges stand in the open places of Paris itself—grim smiths beating and forging at lock and barrel there. The clockmakers have come, requisitional, to do the touch-holes, the hard-solder and file-work . . . The women sew tents and coats, the children scrape surgeon's lint, the old men sit in the market-place; able men are on march; all men in requisition; from town to town flutters, on the Heaven's winds, this Banner, 'The French People risen against Tyrants.'"

Carlyle's "Cromwell" is more interesting as a study of Carlyle's own mind than as a biography of Cromwell. English history had hardly ever been written, in the forties, with the pure desire of representing facts as they were, but almost always from the point of view of one or other political party, and neither Whigs nor Tories could endorse all Cromwell's words or deeds. Carlyle wrote his hero's life with the avowed intention of showing him in the light of a hero, the one "still strong man in a blatant land," who appealed to his admiration beyond anyone else. Perhaps his attitude of adoration towards everything Cromwell said or did militates against the sympathy of the reader, and his

imaginative power is too strong to make him a good biographer. At the present day we do not feel it needful to "take sides" with either Cromwell or Charles, and prefer that they should be treated as picturesque historical figures only.

"Frederick" is a historical figure treated much in the same way as Cromwell, but he could not have been so sympathetic to Carlyle, and he is even less sympathetic to the average English reader. Carlyle's style, too, had grown more crabbed as he grew older, so that no one who had not gone through an apprenticeship to his earlier works would be likely to read him for pleasure. This was his last great book; the final volume came out when he was seventy years old, and the last sixteen years of his life were silent.

It is plain that Carlyle's style can only be wielded by its own inventor. Imitations of Carlyle have failed so utterly as to justify Matthew Arnold's remark, "Flee Carlylese as you would flee the Devil." The book from which our extracts are taken was very near never seeing the light at all. When the first volume was written, Carlyle lent it to his friend Stuart Mill to read, and Mill's housemaid burnt it by mistake. Carlyle set to work to re-write it at once, and thus we now have the "French Revolution" as a wonderful and unique treasure in our literature.

Carlyle was not only a literary, but also a strong moral force in his day. He did not preach (nor practise) the gentler virtues. But energy, endurance, courage, and conscientious adherence to duty were part of his creed, and his influence is to be seen at work in such men as Charles Kingsley and others, who were the moral teachers of their generation. To them the old, white-bearded, rough-spoken Scotsman was truly a prophet with a divine message for England.

No two styles of English prose could be more utterly different than Carlyle's and Ruskin's. One is like a moun-

tain moor and the other like a clear silver stream. However, the two authors are alike in this, that both, though indirectly rather than directly, were great moral teachers in their day.

John Ruskin's father was a wealthy wine-merchant. Little John was the only child of elderly parents, who took great pains to bring him up according to their special lights. He was allowed no toys nor holidays, he was "not seldom whipped," he was carefully trained in music, drawing, reading aloud, and observation of nature. Every day he read a chapter of the Bible in due order, whatever the subject matter might be, till the whole of the Bible was gone through, and then he began again. At seven he wrote his first poem, and at nine, greatly adventurous, he began "Eudosia, a Poem of the Universe."

He did not go to school like other boys, and when he went to Oxford the only way in which he distinguished himself was in getting the Newdigate Prize for English verse. However, he very soon began to make a name in literature. What moved him to write was his unbounded admiration of J. M. W. Turner, and his belief that the country did not appreciate him. He was only twenty-four when the first volume of "Modern Painters" appeared in 1843, and the world found that a new word-painter had arisen. Take, for instance, this description of a sunset: "I speak especially of the moment before the sun sinks, when his light turns pure rose colour, and when this light falls upon a zenith covered with countless cloud-forms of inconceivable delicacy, threads and flakes of vapour, which would in common daylight be pure snow-white, and which give, therefore, fair field to the tone of light There is, then, no limit to the multitude, and no check to the intensity, of the hues assumed. The whole sky, from the zenith to the horizon, becomes one molten mantling sea of colour and fire; every black bar turns into massy gold, every ripple and wave into unsullied shadowless crimson, and purple, and scarlet,

and colours for which there are no words in language, and no ideas in the mind—things which can only be conceived while they are visible; the intense hollow blue of the upper sky melting through it all, showing here deep, and pure, and lightless; there modulated by the filmy formless body of the transparent vapour, till it is lost imperceptibly in its crimson and gold." ("Modern Painters," i. ii. 2.)

"Modern Painters" was brought out at intervals between 1843 and 1860; in 1849 Ruskin published "Seven Lamps of Architecture"—the Seven Lamps were the seven great moral principles which he conceived should be acted on in all true art—and the "Stones of Venice," when he applied his wonderful gift of language to describing the art treasures of Venice in their splendour and in their decay. At this distance of time his merit as art critic is less considered than it was forty or fifty years ago. He was too enthusiastic to be dispassionate; where he thought he saw a fine moral idea in a work of art he at once classed it as belonging to the period, or the artist, which he most admired; some of his dicta do not now stand. On the other hand, his influence reversed the English attitude towards Art in general, and entirely did away with the ignorance and indifference shown towards it in early Victorian days by persons otherwise cultivated. A man is not now supposed to lower himself by studying art, like Clive Newcome.

The year 1860, which saw the completion of "Modern Painters," was the date from which Ruskin took up another subject besides that of art. There are touches in his earlier works which show that he was interested in social reform; and in that year he began to tackle the subject in earnest. In some papers called "Unto This Last," in the *Cornhill*, and "Munera Pulveris," in *Fraser*, he called in question the conclusion of the political economists of the day. They caused such an outcry that both the magazines put a stop to

the papers; but it is a curious instance of the progress of the world that "Unto This Last" is now one of the books recommended for reading for students taking up political economy as a subject for examination.

In 1870 Ruskin was made Professor of Poetry at Oxford, where he remained till 1882, preaching social reforms by example and influence. He had an enthusiastic following of young men, whom he induced to give their time to labour at the manual work of making a road. It is said that the road was not required by the public, and that the work was inferior, but probably the young men were all the more manly for doing it. In 1882 Ruskin's brain began to show symptoms of failure, and he left Oxford and went to live at Brantwood, Coniston, where, tenderly nursed by loving friends, he lived on till 1900, when he died after a few days' illness.

The passage which follows, which is perhaps one of his most beautiful pieces of work, is taken from the "Queen of the Air," published in 1869. It comes from the third lecture, called "Athena in the Earth":—

"The two orders of animals are the serpent and the bird: the serpent, in which the breath, or spirit, is less than in any other creature, and the earth-power greatest; the bird, in which the breath, or spirit, is more full than in any other creature, and the earth-power least.

"We will take the bird first. It is little more than a drift of the air brought into form by plumes; the air is in all its quills, it breathes through its whole frame and flesh, and glows with air in its flying, like a blown flame; it rests upon the air, subdues it, surpasses it, outraces it; *is* the air, conscious of itself, conquering itself, ruling itself.

"Also, into the throat of the bird is given the voice of the air. All that in the wind itself is weak, wild, useless in sweetness, is knit together in its song . . . . universal,

rippling through the clear heaven in its gladness, interpreting all intense passion through the soft spring nights, bursting into acclaim and rapture of choir at daybreak, or lisping and twittering among the boughs and hedges through heat of day, like little winds that only make the cowslip shake, and ruffle the petals of the wild rose.

"Also, upon the plumes of the bird are put the colours of the air . . . . . all these, seized by the creating spirit, and woven by Athena herself into films and threads of plume; with wave upon wave following and fading along breast and throat and opened wings, infinite as the dividing of the foam and the sifting of the sea-sand; even the white down of the cloud seeming to flutter up between the stronger flames, seen, but too soft for touch."

This prose poem is worth studying as a marvellous piece of English. Some of its music is caused by the way in which Ruskin makes his accented words monosyllables, so that it cannot be read aloud without a slight pause upon each; some of it is due to cunning alliteration, and some to the delicacy of its cadences. We must give a few lines of the companion picture of the serpent.

"It is the strength of the base element that is so dreadful in the serpent; it is the very omnipotence of the earth. That rivulet of smooth silver—how does it flow, think you? It literally rows on the earth, with every scale for an oar; it bites the dart with the ridges of its body. Watch it when it moves slowly—a wave, but without wind! A current, but with no fall! All the body moving at the same instant, yet some of it to one side, some to another, some forward, and the rest of the coil backwards; but all with the same calm will and equal way—no contraction, no extension; one soundless, causeless march of sequent rings, and spectral procession of spotted dust, with dissolution in its fangs, dislocation in its coils. . . . . As the bird is the clothed power of the air, so this is the clothed power of

the dust; as the bird is the symbol of the spirit of life, so this of the grasp and sting of death."

Here is a characteristic picture-description of Ruskin's —the picture is the "Call of St. Matthew," by Carpaccio.

"This man, busy in the place of business, engaged in the interests of foreign governments, thinking no more of an Israelite Messiah than Mr. Goschen, but only of Egyptian finance, and the like—suddenly the Messiah, passing by, says, 'Follow Me!' and he rises up, gives him his hand, 'Yea! to the death!' and absconds from his desk in that electric manner, leaving his cash-box unlocked, and his books for whoso list to balance! A very remarkable kind of person indeed, it seems to me. . . . . Carpaccio knows well that there were no defalcations from Levi's chest, no oppressions in his tax-gathering. This whom he has painted is a true merchant of Venice, uprightest and gentlest of the merchant race; yet with a glorious pride in him. What merchant but one of Venice would have ventured to take Christ's hand, as his friend's—as one man takes another's? Not repentant, he, of anything he has done; not crushed or terrified by Christ's call; but rejoicing in it, as meaning Christ's praise and love, 'Come up higher, then, for there are nobler treasures than these to count, and a nobler King than this to render account to. Thou hast been faithful over a few things: enter thou into the joy of thy Lord' (St. Mark's Rest, 1st Supplement; 1874)."

And here, to conclude, is one of the passages of ethical teaching which give Ruskin, as Carlyle, a right to the name of prophet—it comes from "Sesame and Lilies" (1865):—

"My friends, do you remember that old Scythian custom, when the head of a house died? How he was dressed in his finest dress, and set in his chariot, and carried about to his friends' houses; and each of them placed him at his table's head, and all feasted in his pre-

sence? Suppose it were offered to you in plain words, as it *is* offered to you in dire facts, that you should gain this Scythian honour gradually, while you yet thought yourself alive. Suppose the offer were this: you shall die slowly; your blood shall daily grow cold, your flesh petrify, your heart beat at last only as a rusted group of iron valves. Your life shall fade from you, and sink through the earth into the ice of Caina; but day by day your body shall be dressed more gaily, and set in higher chariots, and have more orders on its breast—crowns on its head, if you will. Men shall bow down before it, stare and shout round it, crowd after it up and down the streets; build palaces for it, feast with it at their tables' heads all the night long; your soul shall stay enough within to know what they do, and feel the weight of the golden dress on its shoulders and the furrow of the crown-edge on the skull;—no more. Would you take the offer, verbally made by the death-angel? Would the meanest among us take it, think you? Yet practically and verily we grasp at it, every one of us, in a measure; many of us grasp at it in its fulness of horror. Every man accepts it who desires to advance in life without knowing what life is; who means only that he is to get more horses, and more footmen, and more fortune, and more public honour, and—*not* more personal soul. He only is advancing in life whose heart is getting softer, whose blood warmer, whose brain quieter, whose spirit is entering into Living peace. And the men who have this life in them are the true lords or kings of the earth—they, and they only."

It would be wrong not to give a little space here to the brilliant group of historical writers who belong to the Victorian period. James Anthony Froude, 1816–1894; E. A. Freeman, 1823–1892; J. R. Green, 1837–1883; and Samuel Rawson Gardiner, 1829–1902.

Of the four, Froude, whose "History of England" was

brought out 1856–1870, was by far the most brilliant writer, and the least accurate historian. He was too imaginative to be bound by accuracy; when for some reason or other a historical figure took his sympathy, he drew a portrait which was always vivid and picturesque, but often entirely unlike the real person. Whenever he considered that a historical personage was a champion of the Reformation, he idealised him at once, and reversed the process with all the opponents of Protestantism. His treatment of Henry VIII. and the Regent Murray—that very shifty and canny Scot whom he calls "noble stainless Murray"—are instances of the former idiosyncrasy, while he can hardly find a good word for Sir Thomas More, and has made poor Mary Stuart the wicked siren of a romance, even attiring her in blood-red velvet for her execution. But at the same time his style is magnificent and it is difficult to lay his volume down.

Freeman's special period is the Norman Conquest; the five volumes of his work bearing that name came out 1867–1879. He also mixes hero-worship with his history, though he has not Froude's love for paradox; it is easy to see that both Alfred and Harold are very near his heart. Whilst Froude's sympathy is given to the champion of the Reformation, Freeman's is given to the champion of England. It was also given to the champions of the down-trodden Christians in the East, and whenever the Turkish Government of his day entered upon a campaign of massacres, Freeman's voice was raised in the newspapers in the defence of the oppressed, in no wavering note. Freeman did not limit his studies to the early middle ages, but was also a "world historian," and an authority on the racial migrations which have resulted in the settling of Europe.

J. R. Green and Samuel Rawson Gardiner are rather later in date than the other two, and wrote history on a different principle. Green called his great work (1874) "The History of the English People," and gave far less prominence

than perhaps had ever been given before to the personalities of Kings and Queens. Here and there he brings a characteristic picture before us, such as that of Elizabeth's address to Mrs. Parker, but his peculiar merit is that he gives brilliant vignettes of the state of society, such as this of the lower classes under the early Georges: "That vast increase of population which followed on the growth of towns and the development of manufactures had been met by no effort for their religious or educational improvement. Not a new parish had been created. Hardly a single new church had been built. Schools there were none, save the grammar schools of Edward or Elizabeth. The rural peasantry, who were fast being reduced to pauperism by the abuse of the poor-laws, were left without moral or religious training of any kind. Within the towns things were worse. There was no effective police; and in great outbreaks the mob of London or Birmingham burnt houses, flung open prisons, and sacked and pillaged at their will. The criminal class gathered boldness and numbers in the face of ruthless laws which made it a capital crime to cut down a cherry tree, and which strung up twenty young thieves of a morning in front of Newgate; while the introduction of gin gave a new impetus to drunkenness. In the streets of London ginshops invited every passer-by to get drunk for a penny, or dead drunk for twopence."

Gardiner's history, the first volume of which appeared in 1863, and which deals with the first half of the seventeenth century, is much less brilliant in style than Green's, but its great merit is its extraordinary fairness. He takes up no brief for Romanist or Protestant, for Cavalier or Puritan, and he sneers at none of them. His object is to get hold of contemporary authorities and find out from them what the personages of history actually did and said, not what later historians attributed to them; and he does not hold that if they did or said things which he would not have

done or said in their place, they were therefore knaves or fools. On the debatable ground of the seventeenth century he is as safe and impartial a guide as has yet appeared upon the scene of literature.

Besides these four names we must mention one who, though not so great as a man of letters, is as an authority perhaps second to none—Stubbs, author of the "Constitutional History of England," and later Bishop of Oxford. His work was that of research rather than of literature, and perhaps we may call him the historian's historian. Froude's imaginative history found little favour in his eyes, and he produced the following epigram on Froude and his follower Kingsley :—

"Froude tells the Edinburgh youth
That parsons seldom speak the truth ;
The Reverend Canon Kingsley cries
That history's a pack of lies.
In face of judgment so malign,
This thought, methinks, should solve the mystery ;
That Froude thinks Kingsley a divine,
And Kingsley goes to Froude for history."

CHAPTER XXIV.

VICTORIAN POETS.

If Alfred Tennyson did not inspire the new thoughts of his generation, he continued to assimilate them through life and expressed them in exquisite words and so handed them on to many to whom they came as new truths. He is the poet of the Victorian age, reflecting its enthusiasms, bringing to its notice the old romance which it was quite ready to accept, and showing, as did his Preraphaelite contemporaries in their sister art, that this old romance could be found in the dress and with the manners of his own day. Through all his long life he continued to write beautiful poems, his later work can hold its own with his earlier; and he attained excellence in many directions. His excellences are so great and so numerous that it is difficult in a short space even to name them. But first we must listen to the sound of his words. They are the very music of verse. Such words are—

> "The moan of doves in immemorial elms,
> And murmuring of innumerable bees."
>
> —*The Princess.*

> "Across the hills and far away,
> Beyond the utmost purple rim,
> And deep into the dying day
> The happy Princess followed him."
>
> —*The Sleeping Beauty.*

"Are pacing thus alone,
Who paced for ever in a glimmering land
Lit by a large low moon."
—*Palace of Art.*

"Music that gentlier on the spirit lies
Than tired eyelids upon tired eyes."
—*The Lotos Eaters.*

And these and other such lovely words tell us delightful facts, hitherto unnoticed truths, about nature. How many people have noticed the dark, late opening twigs of the ash tree after reading—

"More black than ash buds in the front of March,"

as a comparison for a maiden's hair!

How true to nature is the opening of "The Lady of Shalott"—

"On either side the river lie
Long fields of barley and of rye
That clothe the wold and meet the sky."

If we never before saw—

"The oak grass and the sword grass and the bulrush in the pool,"

we shall look for them after reading "The May Queen."

In this exquisite language, and set in these backgrounds of natural beauty, Tennyson tells us stories, some old, some new, romantic or domestic, as the case may be. Some of these are short lyrical poems, such as "The May Queen," "The Miller's Daughter," "The Grandmother," "The Talking Oak," in which last we may notice the modern touches brought into a fanciful setting. Olivia

"Left the novel half uncut
Upon the rosewood shelf:
She left the new piano shut,"

when she went to listen to the voice of the old oak tree. "The Princess" is the earliest of the longer narrative poems and is called by the author "A Medley." So it is, of modern problems and their solutions, old romance half caricatured, grotesque images and sweet serious grace. It contains some of the most beautiful songs Tennyson ever wrote.

"Enoch Arden," the pathetic story of the shipwrecked sailor who came home to find that his wife had taken another mate, is entirely a tale of real life. It contains beautiful descriptions of the desert island on which Enoch was cast.

"Maud" is rather difficult to classify. It is not a very sympathetic story, but contains some of the author's loveliest lines, both for sound and sense, and some of his most perfect love poems.

"O let the solid ground
Not fail beneath my feet
Before my life has found
What some have found so sweet;
Then let come what come may,
What matter if I go mad?
I shall have had my day.

Let the sweet heavens endure,
Not close and darken above me,
Before I am quite quite sure
That there is one to love me;
Then let come what come may
To a life that has been so sad,
I shall have had my day."

In the "Idylls of the King," Tennyson followed in the main the version given us by Sir Thomas Malory of the Arthurian legends. In giving them a new turn and inspiring them with a new spirit, he only did what others who retold those immortal and mysterious tales before him did in their time. He cannot be quoted as an authority on the original

form or meaning of the stories, but he drew out of them new beauties—new thoughts to which they give a delightful shape. He created in King Arthur an ideal hero for his own day, and, where the picture fails, it is because he was hampered by the original framework, as others indeed had been before him. In the contrasting Lancelot he produced a far more complex and consistent character than he found in the vague though splendid hints of his originals. Patriotism and loyalty find the finest expression in Tennyson's verses—

> "Love thou thy land with love far brought,"

and many another scattered stanza, express feelings that can never be outgrown, and of which no one can ever feel ashamed.

The "Ode on the Death of the Duke of Wellington" tells us that—

> "Through all human story
> The path of duty is the way to glory."

The famous "Charge of the Light Brigade" gives to these thoughts their noblest expression.

If "In Memoriam" has not been the most widely admired of all Tennyson's poems, it has certainly been the most deeply loved. It is not only a record of one of the noblest of friendships, of the separation of the friends by death, which the survivor slowly found was not a real separation; it is more than a story of sorrow gradually purified and elevated, it is the expression of faith and trust in God, passing through a period of doubt and difficulty common to many souls, and finally triumphing over them and finding its fullest voice in the magnificent verses which

precede the poem, though they are really the final summing up of its teaching.

"Strong Son of God, immortal Love,
Whom we that have not seen Thy face,
By faith and faith alone, embrace,
Believing where we cannot prove.

Our little systems have their day,
They have their day and cease to be;
They are but broken lights of Thee,
And Thou, oh Lord, art more than they.

We have but faith; we cannot know,
For knowledge is of things we see;
And yet we trust it comes from Thee,
A beam in darkness: let it grow.

Let knowledge grow from more to more,
But more of reverence in us dwell;
That mind and soul, according well,
May make one music as before

But vaster" . . . . . .

"In Memoriam" is well known, but many people hardly appreciate how beautifully Tennyson in some of his later poems uses the discoveries of science to illustrate the truths of religion. "The Dreamer" is a fine instance of this. His farewell to his readers, the beautiful "Crossing the Bar," although the latest, has perhaps become the best known of all his poems.

Alfred Tennyson was born in 1809. He was the son of a Lincolnshire clergyman, and in due time went to Cambridge, where his friendship with Arthur Hallam, the son of the historian, and the Arthur of "In Memoriam," was formed. While there he produced a prize poem on the subject of Timbuctoo, and in 1830 he brought out a

volume of poems in concert with one of his brothers. Another little volume followed in 1832, and two in 1840.

Although his poems met with much adverse criticism at first, such poems as "Locksley Hall," "Sir Galahad," "The Lotus Eaters," "The Sleeping Beauty," to name only a few, made their own way. "The Princess" was published in 1849, and excited great interest; in 1850, at the death of William Wordsworth, Tennyson became poet-laureate, while in the same year the publication of "In Memoriam" established his fame.

That poem came home to people's hearts; the grief to which it gave expression, its solemn consolation and all the difficulties and perplexities that delay consolation, met with a wide response. "Maud" appeared at the time of the Crimean War in 1855, and its conclusion appealed strongly to the enthusiasm then stirring the nation. It was a difficult poem otherwise for the public to accept and for the critics to criticise, but it contains gems of the purest water. The first four "Idylls of the King" appeared in 1858, and the others at long intervals, a fact which has greatly detracted from their general effect and prevented readers from grasping the main plan of the poem. It should be read straight through as now published, when the design and meaning of it comes out much more clearly than as it was first presented bit by bit to the public. "Enoch Arden" appeared in 1864, and until the time of his death on October 6th, 1892, Lord Tennyson, whose peerage was the first to be bestowed as an acknowledgment of literary merit, produced at intervals volumes of lovely verse.

His great contemporary, Robert Browning, was much longer in finding a public. His writings have never been so universally popular as those of Tennyson; but they inspire in some minds the most intense enthusiasm. It has been well said that to those who accept him "his teaching

becomes an essential part of their intellectual and spiritual being, an ever-present influence in their daily lives."

Although his lines are often very difficult and obscure in expression, full of queer allusions and illustrations, the root idea of his teaching is simple, however hard to accept. He insists over and over again, in different ways, that this life is only the beginning of the life to come, a schooling for it and a preparation, and therefore that every "blow and biting sculpture" which comes to the soul is not only to be endured but welcomed as enabling it to rise higher. From this belief it follows also that all our actions are of immense importance and all our feelings infinitely wider, deeper, and higher than if they ended with our mortal lives. On these truths Browning insists with every variety of circumstance and illustration, and he further proclaims that in the Incarnation of Christ they find their only complete expression. Thus he has been well called pre-eminently the Christian poet. Unfulfilled hope, love that "has no earthly close," work which we have had the heart to plan and not the hands to do, will find their outcome, and all earth's beauty is but the forecast of Heaven.

As he says in "Rabbi Ben Ezra"—

> "Thoughts hardly to be packed
> Into a narrow act,
> Fancies that broke through language and escaped;
> All I could never be,
> All men ignored in me,
> This, I was worth to God, whose wheel the pitcher shaped.

And in that most puzzling poem, "Easter Day," which is full of obscurities, both of thought and expression, we find the brave words—

> "And so I live, you see,
> Go through the world, try, prove, reject,
> Prefer, still struggling to effect
> My warfare; happy that I can

Be crossed and thwarted as a man,
Not left in God's contempt apart,
With ghastly smooth life, dead at heart,
Tame in earth's paddock as her prize."

And in "Abt Vogler"—

"All we have willed, or hoped, or dreamed of good shall exist;
Not its semblance, but itself; no beauty, nor good, nor power,
Whose voice has gone forth, but each survives for the melodist.
When Eternity affirms the conception of an hour,
The high that proved too high, the heroic for earth too hard,
The passion that left the ground to lose itself in the sky,
Are music sent up to God by the lover and the bard;
Enough that He heard it once, we shall hear it by and by."

And the full assurance is found in the vision of David in the poem of "Saul," when he cries—

"He who did most shall bear most; the strongest shall stand the most weak.
'Tis the weakness in strength, that I cry for! my flesh, that I seek
In the Godhead! I seek and find it, O Saul, it shall be
A Face like my face that receives thee; a Man like to me
Thou shalt love and be loved by, for ever; a Hand like this hand
Shall throw open the gates of new life to thee! See the Christ stand!"

Although Browning does not describe nature in the way that Tennyson does, we find that he can flash a picture at us with a few words in a wonderful way. We can see—

"The old June weather
Blue above lane and wall."

The "hill-side dew-pearled" makes us feel the fresh morning, and what a feeling of coolness amid heat is given us by "the lilies still living and blue," which David twined round his harp strings!

Browning puts before us a gallery of portraits of the most varied and interesting kind, his method is dramatic,

and he speaks through his characters; but it is a drama of thought and character, for his plays have little outward movement and are not fitted for the stage. "My Last Duchess," Andrea del Sarto and his Wife, Karshish, the Arabian Physician, stand out clearly before us, and, above all, the actors in his great poem of "The Ring and the Book." This old story of a trial in an Italian Court told by the actors and spectators in turn is extremely difficult reading; it is full of repetition, of close and difficult argument, of out-of-the-way learning; when we have taken in one side of the story, we are immediately confronted with the other. But when the difficulty is faced and the long poem carefully and patiently read the fascination of it grows upon us: the vividness and the beauty of the characters stand out clearly, and we feel all the wonder and pathos of the story. Pompilia is, perhaps, the only modern heroine who can stand beside Imogen or Juliet on equal terms; she is an exquisite creation, and her character and appearance are brought before us by all sorts of little touches with consummate skill.

Browning's women are much more interesting and individual than Tennyson's: the latter gives us gentle typical maids and matrons without much individuality, but Browning strikes the complex modern note; and the discussion of their motives of action, and of their merits and demerits, is full of interest and occupies many meetings of the "Browning Societies" formed on purpose to study his works. There are no "Tennyson Societies," perhaps because many of us study him without any special inducement.

Yet we must not leave this notice of the more difficult poet without admitting that he could write with a flow and a swing which recommends him to all alike.

The magnificent lament for the "Lost Leader," the joy of "Bringing the Good News from Ghent to Aix," and the

simple pathos and true religious feeling of "The Boy and the Angel," are popular in the best sense of the word without being commonplace.

Robert Browning was born in 1812 of Nonconformist parents. His father was a man of uncommon powers of mind who appreciated his son's gifts, so that Browning never had to contend with the opposition and misunderstanding at home which has met so many lads of genius, and perhaps this fact may have had something to do with the strong and cheerful temper which he carried through life. His first poem, "Pauline," was published in 1832, "Paracelsus" in 1835, "Sordello" in 1845. The length and obscurity of this latter poem has contributed much to the popular idea that Browning is unreadable, and people should leave it till they are thoroughly in sympathy with him. "Bells and Pomegranates" appeared at intervals from 1841 to 1846, "Men and Women" in 1855, while the great "The Ring and the Book" appeared in 1868. He published many other works and died on the 12th of December, 1889. He married in 1846 one whom he was proud to call his fellow poet, Elizabeth Barrett.

The story of the romantic and high-minded courtship and marriage of Elizabeth Barrett and Robert Browning must be sought for in the many volumes which have been devoted to the subject and in the published letters which passed between them. Mrs. Oliphant says she "was much more poet than her husband, though her poems are much less poetry." Nevertheless, some of them are very beautiful, though they are often marked by an over-exuberant and exaggerated style. The longer and earlier ones are visionary and dreamy tales in verse, of which "The Lay of the Brown Rosary" and "Lady Geraldine's Courtship" are perhaps the best known. It is in some of her shorter poems, however, that her fame as a real poet must rest. "The Dead Pan" is a very fine poem, and "The Cry of the

Children" has perhaps had nearly as much fame and influence as Hood's "Song of the Shirt."

"Do ye hear the children weeping, O my brothers,
Ere the sorrow comes with years?
They are leaning their young heads against their mothers,
And that cannot stop their tears.
The young lambs are bleating in the meadows,
The young birds are chirping in the nest,
The young fawns are playing with the shadows,
The young flowers are blowing towards the west;
But the young, young children, O my brothers,
They are weeping bitterly!
They are weeping in the playtime of the others,
In the country of the free."

No doubt this poem, called forth by the miseries of child labour before the Factory Acts were passed, has done much to ensure that merciful legislation should not only be submitted to, but demanded by public opinion. "The Lost Bower," though lengthy, has much charm, and so have "My Doves" and "The Romance of a Swan's Nest."

She struck her highest note in the series of love-poems called "Sonnets from the Portuguese," in which she tells the story of her love for her husband, though they were never shown to him until long after their marriage.

"How do I love thee? Let me count the ways:
I love thee to the depth and breadth and height
My soul can reach, when feeling out of sight
For the ends of Being and Ideal Grace.
I love thee to the level of every day's
Most quiet need, by sun and candlelight,
I love thee freely, as men strive for Right;
I love thee purely, as they turn from Praise;
I love thee with the passion put to use
In my old griefs, and with my childhood's faith;
I love thee with a love I seemed to lose
With my lost saints—I love thee with the breath,
Smiles, tears, of all my life!—and, if God choose,
I shall but love thee better after death."

In "Aurora Leigh," a long novel in verse, Mrs. Browning struck a thoroughly modern note, and put her finger on many problems first affecting society at the time when she wrote. The poem contains many fine passages, and though it has never been exactly popular, has proved of deep interest to many, in spite of some violence both of thought and expression, and of conclusions with which it is often difficult to sympathise.

Elizabeth Barrett was born in 1809, and wrote much in early life. She began to publish in 1826, but the first collected edition of her poems was in 1844, and in 1846 she married Robert Browning, and with her marriage entered on a new life, for she had been an invalid previously, almost entirely confined to the house. She recovered afterwards a fair share of health, and led an ideally happy life till 1861, when she died.

Matthew Arnold is another great figure belonging to the great Victorian age—younger, but still of the same period as Tennyson and Browning. He was the son of Dr. Thomas Arnold, the famous head master of Rugby, but while retaining all the "moral earnestness" for which his family have always been remarkable, his faith in Revelation became obscured by the perplexities of the times in which he lived. He wrote several prose works, of which "Literature and Dogma" is perhaps the most famous. But it is as a poet that he has won the most lasting fame. His writings have a purity and perfection of style of which it is impossible to weary. He has not Browning's joyful outlook either here or hereafter, but he may lead his readers to a great patience and to noble efforts if such hope is for a time denied to them. He wrote several long narrative and dramatic poems, of which "Baldur Dead" and "Sohrab and Rustum" are perhaps the most interesting. "Thyrsis, a Monody," was written in memory of his friend, Arthur Hugh Clough, who died in 1861, and "Rugby College Chapel" commemorates his father.

"O strong soul, by what shore
Tarriest thou now? For that force,
Surely, has not been left vain;
Somewhere, surely afar,
In the sounding labour house vast
Of being, is practised that strength,
Zealous, beneficent, firm."

"The Forsaken Merman" is one of the best known of his poems, and there is much pathos in the language of the poor sea-spirit whose human wife has felt the call of her soul to human love and faith, and left husband and children behind in the wild sea. "Empedocles on Etna" is a fine expression of classical sentiment. We quote the following lovely description:

"What forms are these coming
So white through the gloom?
With garments out-glistening
The gold-flowered broom?

What sweet-breathing presence
Out-perfumes the thyme?
What voices enrapture
The night's balmy prime?

Apollo comes leading
His choir the Nine:
The leader is fairest,
But all are divine."

These lovely verses show how his mind was steeped in classical images, and how beautifully he could reproduce them.

MORALITY.*

We cannot kindle when we will
The fire which in the heart resides;
The spirit bloweth and is still,
In Mystery our soul abides.
But tasks in hours of insight willed
Can be through hours of gloom fulfilled.

* By kind permission of Messrs. Macmillan and Co.

With aching hands and bleeding feet
We dig and heap, lay stone on stone;
We bear the burden and the heat
Of the long day and wish t'were done.
Not till the hours of light return,
All we have built do we discern.

Then when the clouds are off the soul,
When thou dost bask in Nature's eye;
Ask how she viewed thy self-control,
Thy struggling tasked morality—
Nature, whose free, light, cheerful air,
Oft made thee, in thy gloom, despair.

And she whose censure thou dost dread,
Whose eye thou wast afraid to seek,
See, on her face a glow is spread,
A strong emotion on her cheek!
"Ah child," she cries, "that strife divine,
Whence was it, for it is not mine?

"There is no effort on my brow,
I do not strive, I do not weep;
I rush with the swift spheres and glow
In joy, and when I will, I sleep.
Yet that severe, that earnest air,
I saw, I felt it once—but where?

I knew not yet the gauge of time,
Nor wore the manacles of space;
I felt it in some other clime
I saw it in some other place.
'Twas when the heavenly house I trod,
And lay upon the breast of God."

Matthew Arnold was born in 1822, and died in 1888. He was for many years a very efficient Government Inspector of Elementary Schools.

Dante Gabriel Rossetti belonged to a very different school. Painter as well as poet, he had an intense love of colour and of beauty. His aim, perhaps, was to express

spiritual beauty through beauty of form and colour. He belonged to the Preraphaelite school of painters, and wrote and drew for their little periodical "The Germ." He was deeply moved by the mediæval revival which they represented in Art, and some of his chief poems are feeble imitations of old ballads. They are fine in their way, but not really much like the simple old speech of an earlier time. "Sister Helen" and "The King's Tragedy" are among the best. His poem, "The Blessed Damozel," with the picture belonging to it, is perhaps the best known of his works, and is a beautiful fancy. He translated Dante's "Vita Nuova" into exquisite prose, and also many of the love sonnets of Dante and his contemporaries, and a set of sonnets of his own, called "The House of Life," is full of strange fire, colour, and a sort of mysterious charm. Here is a charming little translation from an anonymous Italian poet:

OF TRUE AND FALSE SINGING.

"A little wild bird sometimes at my ear
Sings his own verses very clear;
Others sing louder that I do not hear,
For singing loudly is not singing well;
But ever by the song that's soft and low
The master singer's voice is plain to tell.
Few have it and yet all are masters now,
And each of them can trill out what he calls
His ballads, canzonets, and madrigals.
The world with masters is so covered o'er,
There is no room for pupils any more."

Dante Gabriel Rossetti was born in 1828 of Italian parents, and died in 1882. He has been the subject of more than one interesting biography.

His sister, Christina Rossetti, cannot be passed over without a few words. She was a true poet. "The Goblin Market" is most quaint and original, a sort of folk-lore story, grotesque and sweet, and rather inconsequent, as such

tales usually are. The description of the naughty goblins who bring fruit to tempt the heroine is delightful.

> "One had a cat's face,
> One whisked a tail,
> One tramped at a rat's pace,
> One crawled like a snail,
> One like a wombat prowled obtuse and furry,
> One like a ratel tumbled hurry skurry:
> She heard a voice like voice of doves
> Cooing all together;
> They sounded kind and full of loves
> In the pleasant weather."

And when her good sister has saved her, the girl tells her children—

> "There is no friend like a sister
> In calm or stormy weather:
> To cheer one on the tedious way,
> To fetch one if one goes astray,
> To lift one if one totters down,
> To strengthen while one stands."

She wrote another long poem called "The Prince's Progress," and a great many religious ones which are rather melancholy in character. Of these, "Uphill" is perhaps the finest.

Two other women, contemporary women poets, must have a word of mention—Adelaide Anne Proctor and Jean Ingelow. "The Legends and Lyrics" of the former have great sweetness and grace, though they are certainly melancholy and sentimental. She wrote the once famous song, "O Doubting Heart," and in one of her longer poems she sums up the characteristics of mediæval romances with a most happy touch—

> "That gracious child of France,
> Angel and knight and fairy, called Romance."

Jean Ingelow's poems are, perhaps, more cheerful in character. They are full of charming descriptions of flowers, birds, and insects, and in "The Bells of Enderby," a description of a great tidal wave on the coast of Lincolnshire, she rose to her highest level.

But it must be confessed that the women poets of this date are tender and sympathetic, but hardly strengthen their readers to fight the battle of life.

William Morris must not be forgotten. His smooth and graceful verse flows without a break, and in "The Earthly Paradise" and "The Life of Jason" he gives a beautiful rendering of many classical tales. "Sigurd the Volsung" is a version of the great Nibelungen story. It is a very fine poem, full of the wild strength of the theme. Morris called himself "the idle singer of an empty day," but he sang very sweetly, and the poems afterwards inspired by socialist ideals were not without fire and spirit. "The Earthly Paradise" appeared in 1868. William Morris is also well known for his great skill in decorative arts, and many hang up his wall papers who never read his poems.

Charles Kingsley will be shortly noticed among our prose writers, but we must not forget that he wrote a few poems of high merit. The famous songs, so often set to music, "The Sands of Dee," the "Three Fishers," and "O that We Two were Maying," are the best known, but others have equal merit. His play, "The Saints' Tragedy," is a fine conception, and is unlike anything else. He had so many other claims to public notice that his excellence as a poet has been somewhat overlooked.

THE UGLY PRINCESS.

"My parents bow, and lead them forth,
For all the crowd to see—
Ah, well! the people might not care
To cheer a dwarf like me.

They little know how I could love,
How I could plan and toil,
To swell those drudges' scanty gains,
Their mites of rye and oil.

They little know what dreams have been
My playmates, night and day;
Of equal kindness, helpful care,
A mother's perfect sway.

Now earth to earth in convent walls,
To earth in churchyard sod;
I was not good enough for man,
And so was given to God."

CHAPTER XXV.

VICTORIAN NOVELISTS.

When readers of a younger generation approach the works of William Makepeace Thackeray they must not forget that he succeeded to a yet older generation whose novels were lengthy, explanatory, and discursive, and who dealt with a coarser and rougher world than the one they know. We cannot now read Thackeray's novels as pictures of contemporary life, and young people, in judging of them, must be prepared to realise this. The manners and customs which he attacks with such fierce scorn and denounces as "snobbish" are not, at least in outward form, our manners and customs, and perhaps we may thank Thackeray in part for the fact.

Thackeray has been called a cynical writer, and certainly he turns out the seamy side of much apparent goodness, but then he also, with infinite pathos and power, shows us a "soul of goodness in things evil," and his works make altogether for righteousness. His greatest defect, to a modern reader, is in his ideal of a good woman. His wives, mothers, and sweethearts are flattered as unselfish saints, but they are almost always selfish, jealous, silly, and spiteful. That he began to grow out of this notion we shall see as we follow his greater works.

His first complete work was the "History of Samuel Titmarsh," then the "Great Hoggarty Diamond" and the "Yellowplush Papers," from which we get "Jeames" as a generic name for footmen.

In 1846 came "Vanity Fair," intended, as its name

indicates, for a picture of a wicked world. This contains the immortal character of Becky Sharp—the clever, scheming, charming girl whose every word and act is amusing, while, at the same time, the reader is never for one moment allowed to forget her heartlessness, her selfishness—in fact, her essential *badness*. Who can forget Becky fascinating Jos Sedley in Amelia's simple white muslin, and sitting to receive Lord Steyne in her little pink silk frock, with the little shirt, which she has begun to make for her baby, and brings out for company work when he is a big boy. The Crawley family present a wonderful picture which would seem impossible were it not that we had been familiarised with similar characters by older novelists. Old Sir Pitt Crawley is a survival, and the outcome of such training as he gives is seen in his elder son, who turns respectable, and in the wonderful pathos of the younger Rawdon Crawley, who, bad as he was, had a good heart, and is like some great helpless kindly animal in the hands of Becky. These characters and others burn themselves in on the memory and imagination.

The book contains a marvellous description of Brussels on the eve of the Battle of Waterloo and of the famous ball. The selfishness of those who wished to save their own skins at all costs, the misery of the poor young wife made a widow by one fatal shot—once read all this can never be forgotten.

The Marquis of Steyne, with no virtue but personal courage, with the grim and awful tragedy of his family history in the background, is another most striking figure; the unsparing severity and yet the reticence with which all the part of the story dealing with him is given shows art of the most consummate kind. We could wish that the good Dobbin had had a little more sense, but the last glimpse of him with his family is excellent. "Pendennis" appeared in 1850, and is in a lighter style. It was called a novel

without a hero, and certainly Pen is unheroic enough, but he is natural, and not a bad fellow. The outstanding character is Major Pendennis, the worldly old uncle, who rescues him from his love affair with the excellent but undesirable actress. All this episode is full of humour and life. In George Warrington we begin to get a noble ideal; but it is, perhaps, difficult to be interested in the ladies, or to forgive Mrs. Pendennis for her treatment of poor little Fanny.

"Esmond," in 1852, comes next, and the great merit of this tale of the early eighteenth century has always been said to be its absolute fidelity to the spirit of the age it represents. Henry Esmond is a noble, high-minded hero, but his virtues, his ideals, are those of his day. We cannot detect a modern note in him. The scenes are most dramatic and picturesque, and the figure of the young prince vividly touched in. The beautiful and wicked Beatrix meets with no excuse, but we see her evolution, so to speak, and cannot but feel that she had something to say for herself.

Lady Castlewood is, perhaps, even a more skilful study, but, in spite of the author, she cannot be said to be pleasing.

"The Newcomes," which began to appear in monthly parts in 1853, depicts a much more modern world than "Vanity Fair." Colonel Newcome is the ideal good and religious soldier so vividly and pathetically given that no similar character has since been painted without reflecting him. His son Clive, the young painter, is a much more romantic hero than Pendennis, and Ethel Newcome gives the author's only attempt at a good religious woman who was also intellectual and sensible. She does not represent badly the high-minded young lady of her day.

Clive's married life is almost too painful to be read, all the more because we feel that it might all have happened

exactly as it is told. The book is, perhaps, the easiest of any of Thackeray's novels for a modern reader to like. "The Virginians," which is intended as a sort of sequel to "Esmond," is much less interesting, and has never been nearly so popular. Thackeray wrote various burlesques and historical studies, among which last was "The Four Georges." He edited for a time the *Cornhill Magazine*, and he illustrated many of his own stories, not always with perfect artistic success, but with great power of conveying his own idea of the characters. His delightful story, "The Rose and the Ring," would have lost much if any other had illustrated it. It is a sort of fairy-burlesque, unspeakably funny and full of clever touches, such as when Prince Giglio, the hero, comes into his kingdom, and immediately begins to talk the best blank verse.

William Makepeace Thackeray was born in Calcutta in 1811. His father was an Indian Civil Servant. He was educated at Charterhouse (which he afterwards described as Grey Friars), and he died in 1863. He was a person of strong domestic affections, and devoted to his two daughters. He speaks of them in the following charming verse:

> "I thought while day was breaking
> My little girls were waking,
> And smiling and making
> A prayer at home for me."

His elder daughter became Mrs. Richmond Ritchie, whose novels, "The Story of Elizabeth," "The Village on the Cliff," and others, show much inherited power.

Charles Dickens was the contemporary of Thackeray, and obtained a far wider if not a deeper hold on popular affection. It has been said that he has given more innocent enjoyment to a larger number of readers than any other writer, and certainly his public is immense, and does not diminish, as it constantly spreads downwards as more people

acquire a taste for reading, and whole editions of his books are given away with pounds of tea. He was a writer with a purpose, indeed with many purposes, and he attacked many abuses with an unsparing hand, such as the famous Yorkshire schools, the ill-treating of children in workhouses, the old style of nurses, and the delays of the Court of Chancery and the "Circumlocution" Office.

Perhaps one of the best things he did for us was to widen, almost to create, the sympathy of class with class. Certainly he mixed up classes together in a curious way, and he was not successful in describing well-bred people; but he made us realise our common sympathies and our common humanity, and he showed us how to laugh and cry with all our fellows. His effects were often over-laboured, and he laid too much stress on external peculiarities, especially in his later works; but how many friends he has given us! His comedy is delightful and we never tire of it, and though some of his pathos runs into sentimentality and is far too much drawn out, he can give us genuine pathos, as in the lonely childhood of "David Copperfield," or the feelings of the returned convict in "Great Expectations." His plots are very elaborate and often confused, and he dealt in impossible changes of purpose and character. Perhaps what may be called the romantic element in his books has hardly been sufficiently appreciated. His treatment all through his writings of the River Thames is worth noting: its beauty and its dreariness, its sights and its sounds mingle with the fate of the characters; you feel that the river has a character and an influence of its own. In this Dickens shows that he was not without a poetical imagination. Many parts of the "Old Curiosity Shop," the opening chapters of "Great Expectations," and many descriptions of scenery, notably those dealing with our old English coach roads, are highly imaginative in character. Though in a less degree than when studying

Thackeray, we must remember that in the works of Dickens we come upon the ways of another generation. Drinking habits are treated as a joke and a matter of course in a way which offends the conscience of the present day, and in various little ways the standard differs, but all else is good, wholesome, and kind.

Is it necessary to recall to present-day readers the delightful character of Mr. Pickwick, a creation who can hold his own with Mr. Punch? "Pickwick" made Dickens' reputation, but it is much less of a regular novel than "Nicholas Nickleby," which immediately followed it. Dotheboys Hall, the terrible school where cruelty reigned supreme, really drove such schools out of the land, and made them impossible. But what other "realistic" writer ever mixed so much fun with his sad stories? The whole Squeers family, with 'Tilda and John Browdie, enable us to bear the pathos of Smike. And anything more entirely delightful than the travelling company of the Vincent Crummles, the aspirations of Mrs. Kenwigs and the humours of Mrs. Nickleby can hardly be found in fiction.

"Martin Chuzzlewit" offended and perhaps instructed the American nation, but we remember it chiefly for the immortal Sairey Gamp, who has left her name both to untrained nurses and umbrellas, and for her friend and partner Betsy Prig. Mr. Pecksniff should not be forgotten. "David Copperfield" is perhaps the most interesting on the whole of all the novels. The story of David's childhood, his mother, his injuries and his wanderings, are truly and not conventionally pathetic. The Micawbers give us some of the best of his fun, and though his love story with Dora is silly, never was there a silly boy and girl attachment more naturally told. All Dickens' styles, the romantic, the funny and the sentimental, meet in Little Em'ly and her story, where we note that all the sympathy is on the side of virtue and goodness. Agnes is probably Dickens' ideal woman, and

though she is a little superhuman, she has none of the pettiness of Thackeray's ladies. "Dombey and Son" is one of the most famous of the novels. Little Paul made a great mark at the time, but the book, though not without the characteristic merits, is full of the author's faults; and the same may be said of "Bleak House," and perhaps of "Our Mutual Friend" and "Little Dorrit."

"Great Expectations" contains some of his best work. The story of the convict is really tragic and unconventional, and Pip's early days are charming. But false tragedy and the most conventional kind of melodrama appears in the story of Miss Havisham.

The "Old Curiosity Shop," with Little Nell and her grandfather, Mrs. Jarley's waxworks, and many grotesque, comic and pathetic portraits and sketches, is of a more fanciful kind. The two tales not of his own day, "Barnaby Rudge" dealing with the Gordon riots, and "The Tale of Two Cities" with the French Revolution, stand a little apart. The first has given us Dolly Varden, and the often quoted Raven, also Miss Miggs and Sim Tappertit; the latter is a striking story, and has been more than once dramatised. Perhaps "Oliver Twist," one of the earliest, was also one of the most influential of Dickens' books. It did much to bring about a reform of workhouse management, and gave us the name of Bumble for a stupid and selfish parish official.

Dickens edited *Household Words* and *All the Year Round*, magazines appealing to their readers by the excellence of their contents, sufficiently attractive in those days without illustrations or ornamental covers.

His Christmas books appeared in connection with these, and "The Christmas Carol," "The Cricket on the Hearth," "The Chimes," and others, have been among the most popular of his works, and certainly exhibit all his characteristics. The illustrations, which Cruikshank first, and afterwards

Hablot Browne, contributed to the first editions of Dickens' works, did much to fix the characters in the public mind.

Charles Dickens was born in 1812, and experienced in his childhood some of the miseries which he describes in "David Copperfield." He worked hard at his profession all his life, and died in 1870. In his latter years he gave dramatic readings from his works, which were very popular and profitable.

In 1847 an anonymous book broke suddenly upon the world of novel readers, and at once made its mark. Everybody was wondering whether "Currer Bell" was a man or a woman, and who the surprising new author could be. The story of the three Brontë sisters, Charlotte, Emily and Anne, who wrote as Currer, Ellis, and Acton Bell, has been told over and over again, so that the present generation is almost more familiar with themselves than with their books, and it is perhaps difficult to realise how new and original "Jane Eyre" seemed on its first appearance. The heroine, who was not beautiful and did not own to being charming, though it is abundantly evident that she had her full share of fascinating qualities, and who was more or less independent and unconventional, was very unlike the received type; and Rochester, the hero, though derived of course from the Byronic ideal, was also new in domestic fiction. He created one type of hero, and has had many followers, ugly, middle-aged men, at whose feet the heroines abjectly cast themselves; for his imitators did not improve upon him. The plot of the story is extravagant and open to criticism; but it is not essential that a work of genius should be faultless, and only genius could have produced the vivid novelty, the clear incisive writing, the inexplicable force of "Jane Eyre." Moreover, in spite of contemporary criticism, Jane is an innocent and lofty-minded creature, who suffers for her obedience to her sense of right, which is never blurred or shaken.

"Shirley," the next book, is perhaps a pleasanter story, and is noted for the truth and vigour of its descriptions of Yorkshire life and scenery. It gives well that blending of moor and mill, heather and smoke, beauty and toil, which is characteristic of the West Riding. The third novel, "Villette," takes us to the school where Charlotte Brontë went in Brussels, and is probably very much of an autobiography. It gives a very unfavourable picture of the heads of the school, but the character of the Professor, M. Paul Emmanuel, is very life-like, and in its way attractive.

It is not easy to account for the height at which critics place the fame of Emily Brontë, rating her one novel, "Wuthering Heights," above any of Charlotte's. It is a weird, fierce picture of half savage life in old Yorkshire, full of force and fervour. The writings of the third sister, Anne, are much less remarkable. The three together published a volume of poems which are regarded as of high merit. Emily's verse certainly had a note of real and unusual genius.

Charlotte Brontë was born in 1816, at Haworth, a village not far from Heckmondwike, of which her father was vicar. She and her sisters suffered from bad health and narrow means, and went out as governesses, a calling which they were singularly unfitted to fulfil. They had a brother who was a source of trouble and disgrace; and Emily and Anne died young of consumption. Charlotte married her father's curate, Mr. Nicholls, and also died early in 1855.

We cannot pass over the biographer of Charlotte Brontë, Mrs. Gaskell; although her book wanted in reticence, she did much to create the personal fame of the three sisters; and her own novels, "North and South," "Mary Barton," "Cranford," "Silvia's Lovers," and "Wives and Daughters," have an exquisite and delicate merit, hardly ever surpassed. "Wives and Daughters" depicts the world of Miss Austen after it has gained a soul.

Mary Anne Evans also wrote under a pseudonym and is known as George Eliot. To many, she is the greatest of English novelists, though of late years her popularity has waned a little under the influence of newer schools of art and literature. She wrote of English country life, of fields and lanes and farmhouses, country towns and streets, of simple home-staying folk, and she wrote of them from the inside, and so discovered, and was able to describe, their spiritual struggles and moral efforts as no one ever described them before. She was able to show the deep romance of family affections and family claims; perhaps the great lesson she taught was the claims these make on the soul.

"Scenes of Clerical Life" appeared in *Blackwood's Magazine* in 1857, and at once attracted notice for their pathos, humour, and truth to life. If such as this is the true life of commonplace people, how can we ever dare to despise any human being again? "Adam Bede" came in 1859, with its high moral of the inevitable consequence of our actions, its enchanting fun in Mrs. Poyser's character, and its wonderful picture of the working of religion in different, yet simple people—in a simple time.

In the "Mill on the Floss," Maggie Tulliver is a revelation of impetuous fretted girlhood which has never been equalled, and no one can ever forget Mrs. Glegg. "Silas Marner" is an exquisite idyll of rural life, and is considered to be her completest work of art. "Felix Holt" is a good deal less perfect, but it is an interesting thing in its way.

In "Middlemarch" the lengthiness and love of philosophising which marred her later books began to gain upon her. There is much less humour in it than in the earlier ones, but in Dorothea Brooke it describes a type of woman absolutely real, although unusual, and never depicted as completely elsewhere. "Daniel Deronda," though it cannot be without power and merit, is, on the whole, less

interesting, and its "purpose" is less sympathetic to the young reader. "Romola," her one historical novel, stands apart. Perhaps the picture of mediæval Florence is almost too much studied and overlaid with details, and it seems to many that Romola is far from equalling either Maggie Tulliver or Dorothea Brooke. But Tito, the weak and self-indulgent youth, led gradually into crime, is a wonderful picture.

George Eliot wrote one play, "The Spanish Gipsy," and several poems, "The Legend of Jubal" being the most important. They contain much beauty of thought and expression, and the verse is smooth and melodious, but somehow they lack inspiration, and are too laboured for the first rank of poetry.

George Eliot was born in 1816, and died in 1877.

We have left little space to deal with one of the greatest influences of the middle nineteenth century, Charles Kingsley, the great Christian Socialist of his day. He had a real love of humanity, and did his best to guide its aspirations into the paths of religion. He wrote many essays, brilliant and inspiring, and full of the most exquisite and truthful descriptions of nature. He was an excellent parish priest, and wrote plain and admirable sermons. He was a naturalist, and made many young people love nature; he was a real poet, though he only wrote a few poems. His first novels were "Yeast" and "Alton Locke," which describe an old world full of unrest and seething with change, but it was, perhaps, not till "Two Years Ago" appeared in 1857 that he made it plain that he had no wish to overturn the existing order of things, but entertained the happy belief that if every one did their duty in their own state of life this would be a very good world.

"Hypatia" is certainly his finest work, and deals mainly with the Alexandrian Church in the days of St.

Cyril. The vividness and vigour of this book are remarkable, and the cultured infidel Jew, Raphael Aben Ezra, is one of the finest characters in fiction. "Westward Ho," a story of the days of Queen Elizabeth, with its wonderful description of South America, its glorious heroes and splendid adventures, is that excellent thing, a book fit for boys, which can be enjoyed by their elders.

He also wrote the well-known story of the "Water Babies," and many sermons and essays. His style was remarkable for the great beauty and accuracy of his description of nature.

He was born in 1819, and died in 1875 at Eversley, in Hampshire, of which he was vicar.

We must spare a word for Anthony Trollope, whose long series of stories of clerical and middle-class life went on from the publication of "The Warden," in 1853, till his death in the end of the eighties. He created the county of Barsetshire, the see of Barset, of which the bishop signed himself T. Barnum; Mrs. Proudie, who has given a nickname to interfering ladies in clerical circles, and other real and charming figures in "The Warden," "Archdeacon Grantley," and "Lady Ludlow," not to speak of many pleasant and natural youths and maidens of his day. He depicted the surface of life in his time with great accuracy, and sometimes with pathos, though he was a very long-winded writer, and his later stories deal too much with dull and disagreeable people. But the "Chronicles of Barset" do chronicle the middle days of Queen Victoria's reign with surprising fidelity.

Mrs. Oliphant also has given us a number of works dealing with much the same world. She had more genius and a less kindly touch. She had a marvellous power of turning the seamy side out of the common relations of life; but she could rise to tragedy, and in some places gave us not realism but reality. "The Chronicles of Carlingford"

are excellent reading, and she could mix romance with unexpected discoveries in human nature in a most original way. She had also a remarkable touch in dealing with the occult and the supernatural, and wrote some most admirable and convincing ghost stories.

In 1854 there appeared a hero who created a new type as surely as the slightly earlier Rochester. Guy Morville, "The Heir of Redclyffe," was the forerunner of numbers of "good heroes," who delighted and helped the people of their day. Charlotte Mary Yonge is often described as a writer for young people. She was so all through her long life, but it was not the young only who delighted in her works and lived in friendship with her characters. Her field was limited, but, within the field marked out by her religious views, she exercised a great gift of character drawing. Her people are all distinct and true to life, though to life under conditions of thought and habit never universal. She made religion romantic, and taught her readers to think nothing so interesting as goodness. She wrote many charming historical tales, and many "parochial" stories of much literary merit. She died in 1901.

The place of Robert Louis Stevenson among the immortals is hardly yet decided. He wrote essays, poems, and novels, all remarkable for great beauty and precision of style. He said many things that came home to the hearts of his immediate contemporaries, and was himself a most interesting figure, fighting a brave battle with ill-health, and most delightful to his friends. He did much to set the fashion for Scottish stories, and created some characters that seem to have made a lasting mark on the minds of his readers.

We have seen what the great men of every age have done for us, in helping us to form a pure and noble ideal of what man may be and do, both in their writings and their

lives; but even they are for us but "stepping stones to higher things." We cannot, and we need not, repeat the work of Cædmon, of Chaucer, of Spenser, or of Milton. As the nineteenth century poetess says:—

> "The past is past,
> God lives, and lifts his glorious mornings up
> Before the eyes of men awake at last.
> We hurry onward to extinguish hell
> With our fresh souls, our younger hope, and God's
> Maturity of purpose. Soon shall we
> Die also! And that then our periods
> Of Life may round themselves to memory
> As smoothly, as on our graves the burial sods,
> We must now look to it to excel as ye,
> And bear our age as far, unlimited
> By the last landmark, so to be invoked
> By future generations as their Dead."

Here we leave the story of our English Literature, lifting up our hearts in thanks to God for its glorious heritage, and setting forth with the courage that springs from faith to carry on the new work of a new day.

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